



United States
of America

Congressional Record

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE 114th CONGRESS, SECOND SESSION

Vol. 162

WASHINGTON, WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 21, 2016

No. 143

Senate

The Senate met at 9:30 a.m. and was called to order by the President pro tempore (Mr. HATCH).

PRAYER

The Chaplain, Dr. Barry C. Black, offered the following prayer:

Let us pray.

Our Father, we wait in reverence before Your throne. Cleanse us from our sins, creating in us clean hearts while renewing a right spirit within us.

Help our lawmakers today to discern Your voice and do Your will. Give them the ability to differentiate Your guidance from all others, permitting You to lead them to Your desired destination. Grant them, O God, minds to know, hearts to seek You, wisdom to find You, and conduct to please You. Speak to them through Your Word, guide them with Your Spirit, and sustain them with Your might.

We pray in Your great Name. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The President pro tempore led the Pledge of Allegiance, as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. PAUL). The majority leader is recognized.

CONTINUING RESOLUTION

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, yesterday the Senate took the next step in allowing us to eventually pass a continuing resolution. While negotiations are ongoing, I want to thank colleagues on both sides for their cooperation in voting to proceed to the bill that will be used as a shell for the CR-

Zika legislation. This will allow us to start work so that when we have an agreement, we will be able to review and debate it.

We all know how important these funds are for combating Zika and supporting our veterans. Let's continue to work quickly so we can eventually pass an agreement as soon as possible.

OBAMACARE

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, on another matter, my friend the Democratic leader has a favorite saying. He often says that the definition of insanity is doing the same thing over and over and expecting a different result. I am not sure his fellow Democrats got the memo.

At a time when ObamaCare is raising health costs dramatically and chasing competition out of the health industry and collapsing on itself, Democrats just rolled out a brandnew health care idea to fix the problem that even they grudgingly admit is plaguing families. And what is their answer? More ObamaCare. No, this is not a joke. Democrats actually introduced legislation last week calling for ObamaCare 2.0, a new government-run health plan. It is not as if this is even a new idea. It is just a stale leftover from the health care debate back in 2009, an idea many Democrats once deemed so bad that it was cut from the final ObamaCare bill, but now it is their Hail Mary.

It is beyond tone deaf, and there are good reasons that so many in their own caucus will not support it. It is insulting to millions of Americans who continue to watch their premiums spike after Democrats said they would be lower. It is insulting to the millions of Americans who continue to watch their out-of-pocket costs shoot ever higher after Democrats said it would be affordable. I am sure Democrats will make plenty more promises to sell their latest bad idea; I am just not sure

the American people are in a mood to listen anymore.

Health care costs just rose last month by the largest amount in over three decades. Deductibles are outpacing wages, premiums are spiking by double digits just about everywhere and could even increase as much as 60 percent in some places. This is ObamaCare's legacy. It is a direct attack on the middle class. It is ruining lives and making life even harder for those who struggle already.

I have a message for our friends across the aisle: Remember what your leader likes to say about doing the same thing over and over. Stop denying reality, stop pretending this is somebody else's fault, own up to what you have done to the middle class, and then work with us to build a bridge away from it. ObamaCare is scary enough for America's middle class. The last thing Americans need now is some government-run sequel.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Democratic leader is recognized.

OBAMACARE

Mr. REID. Mr. President, my entire caucus got the message. We understand Einstein's definition of insanity is doing the same thing over and over again, and the over and over again, my friend should understand, is the fact that Republicans have voted 70 times to repeal ObamaCare, each time with the same result. My friend should know that every one of my Senators got the memo, as he said.

If someone would spend a minute each day flipping through the newspapers about health care, they would understand that ObamaCare has changed America for the better. Twenty million people now have the opportunity to go to the doctor when they

• This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.



Printed on recycled paper.

S5913

are sick or to the hospital when they are hurt. That wasn't the way it used to be, and the American people are beginning to realize that the constant carping about ObamaCare from the Republicans is wrong. It is wrong for a number of reasons. The American people are beginning to realize that with just a little bit of help, ObamaCare could be made even better. A report came out yesterday that premiums for ObamaCare are still less than employer programs. It is about 3 percent lower than the company-run plans.

The marketplace is what it is all about, and that is what is determining what is happening with ObamaCare. The disabled can get insurance, young men and women can stay on their parents' insurance until the age of 26. Insurance companies are limited in how they can punish people, as they did in the past. They can't set an arbitrary limit as to how much insurance they would provide. If somebody was hurt in a serious accident, they would just terminate them from the insurance, not to mention all of the other things. We were at their mercy. Obviously Republicans want to go back to that same system, and it is not a good system.

DONALD TRUMP

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I learned a long time ago here in the Senate that the rules of the Senate do not allow pictures, graphs, and things of that nature to go in the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD, and that is really too bad. I wish I had the time this morning—I read the paper this morning—to blow up this cartoon by the syndicated cartoonist of the Washington Post, Tom Toles. I have talked to him a couple of times over the past many decades because he is really good, and today's cartoon is about as good as it gets.

This is a picture that Tom Toles sketched of Donald Trump. I would like everyone to take a look at it. I wish I could put it in the RECORD. It is a cartoon of Donald Trump, and he is saying: "Maybe we need to start 'profiling' huckster haircuts, beady eyes, blowhard lips, unhealthy orange glow, obvious self-dealing"—and he has money pouring out of his pockets—"overweight, underhanded, ever-shifting positions." And, as Toles always has in every cartoon, there is a little person down in the bottom generally making some snide remark about the cartoon, and what that little person says today is that there is a "body of evidence"—the body of Donald Trump, and he is the one who should be profiled, not the people he wants to have profiled.

A little more about Donald Trump—Mitt Romney and I agree on one thing, and that is one thing for sure. There are other things we would agree on, but let's talk about one thing that Mitt Romney and I agree on, and that is that Donald Trump should release his tax returns. But Trump will not release his tax returns. He refuses to release

his returns, and he comes up with one excuse after another to not release his tax returns. It is a little odd because the Donald Trump we are talking about is not known for cautionary restraint; he is the most unhinged and reckless Presidential candidate ever.

Let's consider just a little bit of his track record. We have seen Trump refer to women in the most crude and derogatory manner. We have seen Trump call immigrants murderers and rapists. We have seen Trump fearmonger against Muslim Americans, even the parents of one of our proud soldiers who lost his life fighting for our country. We have seen Trump mock someone with a disability on more than one occasion. We have seen Trump impugn a Federal judge. Why? Because his parents were Hispanic. We have seen Trump continue to question President Obama's country of origin. We have seen Trump casually raise the specter of an assassination against Hillary Clinton on more than one occasion. This is the Donald Trump we know. Donald Trump will do and say anything regardless of the consequences.

Why does Trump refuse to produce his tax returns? Why is this the one time in his life that he exercises caution? Why does he maintain absolute silence on his taxes? The answer is very simple—because Trump's tax returns would further destroy his Presidential candidacy. Production of his tax returns would again prove that he is a fraud. If the American people had access to Donald Trump's tax returns, they would show he is not the billionaire he claims to be. Trump wants us to believe that in spite of all of his bankruptcies and litigations that have been going on for decades, he is the incredibly wealthy, successful businessman that he portrays himself to be. But he is not, and his tax returns will prove he is far from a wealthy Trump.

Donald Trump's tax returns will also prove that he avoids paying his fair share of taxes. On the rare occasion that Donald Trump's tax returns have been made public—that was on one occasion some time ago—they showed that he paid nothing in income taxes. As the Washington Post reported earlier this year:

The last time information from Donald Trump's income-tax returns was made public, the bottom line was striking: He paid the federal government \$0 in income taxes.

Donald Trump is afraid that if his supporters discover that he has avoided paying taxes, they will see him for what he is—someone the IRS should charge with a crime and investigate, or at least do something. He deserves all the scrutiny he can get because he doesn't want us to see what he has in his so-called income.

Perhaps the most damning evidence of Trump's tax records would be that he lives off the American taxpayer. Donald Trump is a freeloader. Even though Trump refuses to pay his share of taxes, he is content to use other taxpayers' hard-earned money.

Yesterday we learned that his charity—they don't put money in it. He gets other charities to donate to his charity, and then he goes out and tries to be a big shot by donating other people's money. Even though Trump refuses to pay his share of taxes, he is content to use other taxpayers' hard-earned money.

One news outlet has reported that over the last three decades Donald Trump has received \$885 million in tax breaks. Let's put that in perspective. In 2014, the entire State of Ohio received \$686 million in Federal funding to provide benefits for needy families. That money helped almost 120,000 people in Ohio. Trump received \$885 million, and the entire State of Ohio received only \$686 million. There is no question about it: Donald Trump is a welfare king, but the welfare king doesn't want voters to see that he doesn't pay taxes even as he uses a billion of taxpayer dollars to keep his bankrupt companies afloat. Trump doesn't want Americans to see that he claims middle-class tax credits.

This is a report in the New York Daily News:

The flame-throwing Republican contender for the White House appears to be the only New York City billionaire who snagged a tax break aimed at middle class homeowners, raising even more questions about his alleged billions.

Continuing to quote:

An analysis of property records for 38 Big Apple billionaires on the 'Forbes 400' list conducted by Crain's New York Business found Trump was the only one to receive the STAR tax credit. That credit . . . gives those entitled to around \$300 off their tax bill.

So is he a billionaire? I doubt it.

Donald Trump, this self-proclaimed billionaire, has been falsely claiming a \$300 tax break for years. He has done it for a number of years. Like a sponge, Donald Trump soaks up all the taxpayer money he can find while at the same time not paying his fair share of taxes.

Remember, the same Donald Trump, who once said:

The problem we have right now, we have a society that sits back and says we're not going to do anything. And eventually the 50 percent cannot carry, and it's unfair to them, but cannot carry the other 50 percent.

I think Donald Trump is confused about who is carrying whom. He is the one relaxing, playing golf at his golf courses, many of which are largely paid for by taxpayer dollars, and depending at the same time on the American taxpayer to bankroll his company and his golf game, but Trump doesn't seem to care. In fact, he brags about how he uses other people's hard-earned money.

Here is what he said yesterday:

It's called OPM: Other people's money. There's nothing wrong with doing things with other people's money. That's what I do.

How could Speaker RYAN, Senator MCCONNELL, and other congressional Republicans endorse this man for President or endorse him for anything? How can they continue to support Donald Trump as he shuns transparency

and refuses to release the most basic information about his taxes and income?

Hillary Clinton has posted all of her tax records for the last four decades for the world to see. Donald Trump shows us nothing. He is afraid to.

Mr. Trump, prove to every American that you are the wealthy, successful man you claim to be.

Mr. Trump, prove to every American that you have paid your fair share of taxes.

Mr. Trump, prove to every American that you are not mooching off the American taxpayer.

Mr. Trump, release your tax returns. Prove me wrong. Prove Mitt Romney wrong.

I dare you to come clean and show us your tax records.

But he won't.

Mr. President, I see my good friend, the Senator from Illinois, the assistant Democratic leader, on the floor.

I now ask the Chair to announce the business of the day.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

LEGISLATIVE BRANCH APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2017—MOTION TO PROCEED

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will resume consideration of the motion to proceed to H.R. 5325, which the clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

Motion to proceed to Calendar No. 516, H.R. 5325, a bill making appropriations for the Legislative Branch for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2017, and for other purposes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Illinois.

WELLS FARGO

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, every morning paper and most of the newscasts this morning focused in on a hearing of the Senate Banking Committee yesterday. It was a hearing where the President of the Wells Fargo bank was called on to testify. At issue was a recent disclosure that over a period of many years, Wells Fargo bank was enrolling its customers, without their knowledge, in the ownership of bank accounts and credit cards. Many times they faced penalties and charges which they did not understand because they had not asked to be enrolled in these programs. The employees at Wells Fargo bank did it in an effort to win favor within their corporate ranks and even to receive bonuses.

This defrauding of thousands of Wells Fargo customers was finally unearthed by the media and by the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau. As a result, a substantial fine of millions of dollars was paid by Wells Fargo bank, and the President, Mr. Stumpf, was called be-

fore the committee yesterday to explain the situation. He faulted the over 5,000 employees of Wells Fargo bank, who he said were not honest in their dealings with their customers, and they were dismissed. There were questions asked of Mr. Stumpf about the responsibility of the management of Wells Fargo bank for this terrible miscarriage of justice and apparently very few, if any, managers were held accountable.

One particular woman who was in a management capacity had been allowed to leave the bank under extremely positive circumstances. She was given a golden parachute of over \$100 million when leaving the bank. So while 5,300 people, making around \$12 an hour, were being dismissed because of their lack of ethics, this managing woman was, in fact, rewarded with a golden parachute of over \$100 million as she left.

Questions were raised by many of my colleagues, including Senator BROWN, and even Republican colleagues were skeptical of this Wells Fargo presentation. Senator ELIZABETH WARREN was particularly poignant in her remarks that so many of the lower echelon employees were found morally culpable and paid a heavy price, while those at the highest ranks, including Mr. Stumpf himself, were compensated grandly for their leadership during this terrible time. It is an indication of what it takes to bring real justice to a free market system.

I am a person who believes America is lucky to have the economy it has, but I also know that throughout history, there have been excesses where people have had to step in—sometimes the media with disclosure and many times the government with oversight and regulation—to right the wrongs which occur in runaway, rampant capitalism. We saw it, of course, in the recession that hit our country in 2008. Many of the largest banks in this country took advantage of individuals and families and businesses. At the end of it, many people lost their savings, their homes, and their jobs because of the greed of Wall Street, but what we are talking about in the area of justice doesn't just apply to financial institutions, it applies to health insurance as well.

AFFORDABLE CARE ACT

Mr. President, on a regular basis now, the leadership on the Republican side of the aisle has come forward to condemn the Affordable Care Act. It apparently is a big issue which they want to take into the election in November. I hope the American people listen carefully to what we have just heard from Senator MCCONNELL, the Republican leader in the Senate.

Day after day, week after week, month after month, and year after year, for the last 5 years, Republicans have come to the floor and said: Let's abolish ObamaCare. Let's end the Affordable Care Act. I am still waiting for the first Republican to come to the

floor and say: And here is what we will replace it with.

There is a saying in downstate Illinois—I will clean it up a little bit—that any mule can kick down a barn door, but it takes a carpenter to build one. In this situation, the Republicans can't wait to kick down the Affordable Care Act, but they don't have any plans to build a replacement.

So here is what they want to do. They want to go back to what they consider the good old days of health insurance in America.

Six years ago, let me tell me colleagues, health insurance in America was no picnic for most American families. Not only was there a steady increase in premiums year after year, but health insurance companies were very picky about the people they would insure. If you happened to be the parents of a child who had weathered the storm and survived cancer treatment, your child had a preexisting condition. If you could get health insurance, you paid a lot for it. The same thing was true if your wife had survived a heart attack, for example, and was now on the mend and doing well. She had a preexisting condition.

So preexisting conditions became the basis for discriminating against American consumers. Who among us comes from such a perfect family without any health record that we can say there are no preexisting conditions in my family. If you don't have one today, you might have one tomorrow.

One of the things about the Affordable Care Act is, we said health insurance companies cannot discriminate against people because of preexisting conditions. In the bad old days, which the Republicans would return to, they could. Under the Affordable Care Act, they cannot.

We also said that lifetime limits on health insurance policies were unacceptable. So \$100,000 may sound like a lot of money until you are diagnosed with cancer, and then you realize the course of treatment is going to blow through that \$100,000 before you are ultimately going to get what the doctor has ordered. So we eliminated the lifetime caps on these policies that were, in fact, creating poverty among many Americans families because of medical diagnoses.

We also eliminated discrimination based on gender. Why was it that a man applying for a health insurance policy was paying less than a woman applying for a health insurance policy? That discrimination was allowed under the bad old days of health insurance that the Republicans want to return to.

We went further and said: If you are parents and have a young son or daughter, they can stay under your family health insurance plan until they reach the age of 26. Why is this important? Because kids out of college are still looking for work. They may not get a full-time job, they may not get health care benefits, but families want the peace of mind to know they are covered

until age 26, until they can have a chance to develop their own health insurance coverage. Under the bad old days, that coverage was not there. The Republicans would like to go back to that. That is a mistake as far as I am concerned.

We also basically said as well that if you are a senior citizen in America, you are not going to be burdened by what was known as the doughnut hole. People in Medicare are given a benefit for prescription drugs, but as the law was originally written, there was a gap in coverage in that benefit called the doughnut hole. You would be covered for the first few months of the year on expensive drugs; then you would be on your own to either pay out of your savings or not take the drugs for several months before coverage started again. We are closing the doughnut hole as part of the Affordable Care Act. The Republicans would take us back to the days of the doughnut hole, where individual retired Americans would face expenses of \$2,000 or more for drugs each year. We are in the process of closing that doughnut hole. The Republicans would take us back to the bad old days when we didn't have that closure.

They would eliminate the coverage of health insurance brought on by the Affordable Care Act for over 20 million Americans—20 million Americans. Senator MCCONNELL would say: Sorry, we are going back to the bad old days. You and your family don't get health care coverage.

There is something we discovered. Even families without health insurance get sick, and when they do get sick and, in the worst of circumstances, turn up at the doctor or the hospital, they are treated, and many times can't pay for it. Who pays for that care? Everyone else. Everyone else who is paying health insurance will pay for it.

We think it is better under the Affordable Care Act. We achieved this: More and more Americans have their own health insurance, both for care when they are sick as well as for preventive care. We provide preventive care under the Affordable Care Act, particularly for senior citizens so they will avoid serious illnesses that get very expensive down the line.

So what has been the net result of this? Not only are there 20 million more people who have health insurance in America because of the Affordable Care Act, but also the fact is, the rate of increase in costs in health care has slowed down—slower than at any time in recent records or modern memory. It has extended the life of Medicare for another 12 or 13 years because the cost of health care is not rising as quickly as we thought it might.

The Republicans would take us back to the bad old days when the cost of health care was going up even more rapidly. I don't think most Americans would sign up for that.

We also understand that when it comes to the Affordable Care Act,

there are ways to improve it. I signed on to one of the provisions that Senator MCCONNELL took exception to this morning. It is a provision for us to consider a public option when it comes to health insurance. I am all for private health insurance companies competing, doing their best, trying to win the support and the enrollment of American families, but what is wrong with creating a Medicare-like proposal that is a not-for-profit entity providing health insurance along the style of Medicare?

Senator MCCONNELL was pretty critical of that this morning. He hadn't asked most Americans what they think about Medicare. He should. Many of them thank God we have it. For many of them, it meant health insurance when they had no place to turn. The creation of Medicare over 50 years ago was liberating to many seniors. Now they finally have affordable, quality health care after they retire. So putting that on as a public option to be considered by those who are signing up for health insurance would let them shop and let them compete. That to me is consistent with what we want to achieve when it comes to health care in this country.

So we listen time and again to these attacks and critiques of the Affordable Care Act. We have yet to see the Republican alternative. The only alternative they suggest is going back to the bad old days when health insurance cost too much, when health insurance discriminated against people with pre-existing conditions, and when health insurance was a gamble as to whether you would have it from this year to the next.

There are ways to improve the Affordable Care Act. I won't come to argue and will be the last to say that it is perfect as written, but in order to improve it, we need bipartisan cooperation, which we don't have. On the Republican side of the aisle, there have been 60 or 70 votes to abolish it, but not 1 vote to step up and try to improve it, which I would be happy to join in on a bipartisan basis. That is what the American people expect of us.

The last point I would like to make on the issue of health care is to state for the RECORD of the U.S. Senate that we had a meeting yesterday on medical research. This is a good news story, and there aren't a lot of them on Capitol Hill. But we moved forward on a bipartisan basis to make substantial increases in the medical research budgets of the National Institutes of Health. This is the premier medical research facility for the world, and we are lucky to have it right here in the Washington area.

Dr. Francis Collins heads it up. He told me years ago that if he could get 5-percent real growth in medical research for a number of years, we could make dramatic advances when it comes to medical research and cures for diseases. I took him up on that, and I enlisted a joint effort—first with PATTY MURRAY, my colleague from the

State of Washington, who is in a key position on the Appropriations Committee and the authorizing committee in the area of medical research and is totally committed to the effort, and on the Republican side Senator BLUNT of Missouri and Senator ALEXANDER of Tennessee. Then Senator LINDSEY GRAHAM of South Carolina joined me to co-chair the NIH Caucus.

Here are some things you may not know about medical research and how important it is. There was a briefing yesterday on diabetes. I didn't realize until I walked into that briefing that one-third of the annual expenditure for Medicare is for the treatment of diabetes. In addition to that, 20 percent of the annual expenditure for Medicare is for Alzheimer's. So for two diseases, diabetes and Alzheimer's, more than 50 percent of our Medicare budget is being spent each year. If we could develop new drugs, new treatments, new approaches that deal with diabetes and Alzheimer's, it would not only spare the people from the suffering they are going through and from the need for medical care, but it would greatly help our Medicare Program to be more solvent for years to come.

Is medical research a good investment? I think it is the best investment. We have seen it pay off over and over and over again. Do you remember not too long ago when we were talking about people who were making their last trek down to Plains, GA, in the hopes that they would see former President Jimmy Carter for the last time because of his cancer diagnosis? Then, do you remember when President Jimmy Carter held a press conference and said: I am cancer-free. It was because of the development of drugs and medical treatments through medical research. That has given him back his life. For many Americans, it is the same story every day.

We may do a lot of things wrong in Washington, but let's not get medical research wrong. Let's get it right. Let's make it bipartisan, and let's invest in it. I can't think of a better investment for future generations in this country.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. (Mr. COTTON). The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to speak for up to 17 minutes as in morning business.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

CLIMATE CHANGE

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. Mr. President, I am here for the 147th time in my series of speeches urging the Senate to wake up to the consequences of climate change and also to the motives of the outside forces that lull the Senate into persistent somnambulism.

Outside this Chamber, every major scientific society, every one that I know of, of my colleagues' home State universities, all of America's National Labs, our military and security professionals, and NOAA and NASA all agree on the basic science of climate change and broadly support responsible climate action. There may be uncertainty about exactly what year sea level rise will hit what floodmark, for instance, but on the basic idea that climate change is causing seas to rise and floods to come, it is game over.

NASA reported that August 2016 was the warmest August in 136 years of recordkeeping. August tied July as the hottest month the world has seen in the 136 years we have been measuring. More notable, August marked the 11th record-setting month in a row in NASA's data set. Why, in the face of all of that, does this Chamber slumber? Thank the dark influence of the fossil fuel industry.

For years, Big Oil and its allies funded outright denial of manmade climate change. The Union of Concerned Scientists issued this report last year: "The Climate Deception Dossiers: Internal Fossil Fuel Industry Memos Reveal Decades of Corporate Disinformation." The report documents how the big polluters contributed to front organizations and paid scientists to put out junk science contradicting what real, peer-reviewed science and even the industry's own experts knew about how burning fossil fuels affects the environment.

Take ExxonMobil, for example. According to the company's own documents, as recently as 2015, ExxonMobil was still funding organizations that promote climate science disinformation, including the American Legislative Exchange Council, which peddled legislation to State legislatures that included a finding that human-induced global warming "may lead to . . . possibly beneficial climatic changes."

At the Hoover Institution, a senior fellow, not a climate scientist, argued that climate data since 1880 supports a conclusion that it would take as long as 500 years to reach a 4-degree centigrade of global warming.

At the Manhattan Institute of Policy Research, a senior fellow writing about climate change said: "The science is not settled, not by a long shot."

The CEO of the so-called National Black Chamber of Commerce claimed that "there has been no global warming detected for the last 18 years." Tell that to NASA.

Let's not forget the Pacific Legal Foundation, where a senior attorney attacked EPA's authority to even regulate CO₂, in part because it is a "ubiquitous natural substance essential to life on Earth."

All of those pronouncements by Exxon-backed organizations, as reports in both InsideClimate News and the Los Angeles Times have confirmed, run counter to what real scientists know.

Yet, according to the public affairs guy at ExxonMobil, the company has supported mainstream climate science for decades. Their PR guy said: "Frankly, we made the call that we needed to back away from supporting the groups that were undercutting the actual risk" of climate change. Well, that doesn't actually seem to be true.

ExxonMobil's campaign of falsehoods has the attention of several attorneys general, and in today's newspaper, it is revealed that it also has the attention of the Securities and Exchange Commission. Their questions are not unreasonable: Is ExxonMobil actively advancing the notion that its products have little or no effect on the Earth's environment, while at the same time suppressing its own internal research on the effects of carbon pollution, deceiving consumers into buying ExxonMobil products based on false claims? Is the company misleading its investors about its developable oil reserves and long-term prospects in a climate-changed world? It breaks the law to knowingly mislead consumers and shareholders about something material, and climate change is certainly material to ExxonMobil.

As Senator WARREN and I recently wrote in the Washington Post, investigations by States attorneys general are making ExxonMobil nervous, and their Republican friends in Congress are riding to the rescue. House Science, Space, and Technology Committee chairman LAMAR SMITH and his fellow committee Republicans have issued subpoenas demanding that the attorneys general fork over all materials relating to their investigations.

I asked the Congressional Research Service, and as far as they could find, no committee has ever subpoenaed documents in an ongoing State AG investigation.

Setting aside the federalism problem of Congress going after States in a sovereign State function, if they tried this stuff with our Federal Attorney General, they would be rebuffed.

The committee subpoenas also targeted eight organizations, including the Union of Concerned Scientists, the Rockefeller Family Fund, and Greenpeace, ordering them to turn over their internal communications related to what Chairman SMITH describes as "coordinated efforts to deprive ExxonMobil of its First Amendment rights."

Take a moment to absorb that. States attorneys general are investigating whether a fraud has been committed—something State AGs do every day. As Rhode Island's AG, that is what I did. Sometimes we would uncover fraud and sometimes not. Ultimately, if the evidence warranted it and if the attorney general pursued the case to trial, the question of fraud would be resolved in open court.

Instead of praising the State AGs for doing their jobs within our system of checks and balances, congressional Republicans have leapt in to obstruct the

investigation before any evidence becomes public. So far, both the subpoenaed attorneys general and the eight organizations have refused to comply with those subpoenas. I say, good for them. If the committee moves to enforce its subpoenas, the matter will then come before a judge. If that happens, I hope those attorneys general will question whether the committee subpoenas reflect a legitimate governmental effort or are issued on behalf of a private party—indeed, the very private party which is the subject of those attorney general investigations. The law is clear that a legislative committee may pursue even an unworthy legislative purpose, but it is not clear that a legislative committee can lend itself to a private party. Let the court determine whether the House committee is acting as the de facto agent of ExxonMobil.

What might that court consider? Well, first, this is a committee whose chairman has received nearly \$685,000 in campaign contributions since 1989 from the oil and gas industry. The remaining committee majority have received over \$2.9 million in campaign contributions. I expect that is admissible evidence.

What else might the court consider? The committee asserts ExxonMobil has a First Amendment right that it needs to step in to protect. Interestingly, the shoe has been on the other foot when an attorney general of Virginia was tormenting a climate scientist—indeed, tormenting him so badly that the University of Virginia took that attorney general all the way to the Virginia Supreme Court to make him stop. The committee took no interest in that. Theirs is a First Amendment concern that only surfaces when the fossil fuel industry is the subject of investigation.

What else might the court consider? How about that the entire First Amendment argument the committee makes is a crock. Ken Kimmell, president of the Union of Concerned Scientists, noted that the committee "makes no allegation that UCS violated any laws or regulations, and [the] claim, that providing information to attorneys general infringes on ExxonMobil's rights, is nonsense." Mr. Kimmell is right. It is well-established law that there is a clear line between fraud and First Amendment-protected speech. The dean of the Yale Law School has published an article explaining this. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that this article be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

[From The Washington Post, June 24, 2016]

EXXON-MOBIL IS ABUSING THE FIRST AMENDMENT

(By Robert Post)

Global warming is perhaps the single most significant threat facing the future of humanity on this planet. It is likely to wreak havoc on the economy, including, most especially, on the stocks of companies that sell

hydrocarbon energy products. If large oil companies have deliberately misinformed investors about their knowledge of global warming, they may have committed serious commercial fraud.

A potentially analogous instance of fraud occurred when tobacco companies were found to have deliberately misled their customers about the dangers of smoking. The safety of nicotine was at the time fiercely debated, just as the threat of global warming is now vigorously contested. Because tobacco companies were found to have known about the risks of smoking, even as they sought to convince their customers otherwise, they were held liable for fraud. Despite the efforts of tobacco companies to invoke First Amendment protections for their contributions to public debate, the U.S. Court of Appeals for the D.C. Circuit found: "Of course it is well settled that the First Amendment does not protect fraud."

The point is a simple one. If large corporations were free to mislead deliberately the consuming public, we would live in a jungle rather than in an orderly and stable market.

ExxonMobil and its supporters are now eliding the essential difference between fraud and public debate. Raising the revered flag of the First Amendment, they loudly object to investigations recently announced by attorneys general of several states into whether ExxonMobil has publicly misrepresented what it knew about global warming.

The National Review has accused the attorneys general of "trampling the First Amendment." Post columnist George F. Will has written that the investigations illustrate the "authoritarianism" implicit in progressivism, which seeks "to criminalize debate about science." And Hans A. von Spakovsky, speaking for the Heritage Foundation, compared the attorneys general to the Spanish Inquisition.

Despite their vitriol, these denunciations are wide of the mark. If your pharmacist sells you patent medicine on the basis of his "scientific theory" that it will cure your cancer, the government does not act like the Spanish Inquisition when it holds the pharmacist accountable for fraud.

The obvious point, which remarkably bears repeating, is that there are circumstances when scientific theories must remain open and subject to challenge, and there are circumstances when the government must act to protect the integrity of the market, even if it requires determining the truth or falsity of those theories. Public debate must be protected, but fraud must also be suppressed. Fraud is especially egregious because it is committed when a seller does not himself believe the hokum he foists on an unwitting public.

One would think conservative intellectuals would be the first to recognize the necessity of prohibiting fraud so as to ensure the integrity of otherwise free markets. Prohibitions on fraud go back to Roman times; no sane market could exist without them.

It may be that after investigation the attorneys general do not find evidence that ExxonMobil has committed fraud. I do not prejudge the question. The investigation is now entering its discovery phase, which means it is gathering evidence to determine whether fraud has actually been committed.

Nevertheless, ExxonMobil and its defenders are already objecting to the subpoena by the attorneys general, on the grounds that it "amounts to an impermissible content-based restriction on speech" because its effect is to "deter ExxonMobil from participating in the public debate over climate change now and in the future." It is hard to exaggerate the brazen audacity of this argument.

If ExxonMobil has committed fraud, its speech would not merit First Amendment

protection. But the company nevertheless invokes the First Amendment to suppress a subpoena designed to produce the information necessary to determine whether ExxonMobil has committed fraud. It thus seeks to foreclose the very process by which our legal system acquires the evidence necessary to determine whether fraud has been committed. In effect, the company seeks to use the First Amendment to prevent any informed lawsuit for fraud.

But if the First Amendment does not prevent lawsuits for fraud, it does not prevent subpoenas designed to provide evidence necessary to establish fraud. That is why when a libel plaintiff sought to inquire into the editorial processes of CBS News and CBS raised First Amendment objections analogous to those of ExxonMobil, the Supreme Court in the 1979 case *Herbert v. Lando* unequivocally held that the Constitution does not preclude ordinary discovery of information relevant to a lawsuit, even with respect to a defendant news organization.

The attorneys general are not private plaintiffs. They represent governments, and the Supreme Court has always and rightfully been extremely reluctant to question the good faith of prosecutors when they seek to acquire information necessary to pursue their official obligations. If every prosecutorial request for information could be transformed into a constitutional attack on a defendant's point of view, law enforcement in this country would grind to a halt. Imagine the consequences in prosecutions against terrorists, who explicitly seek to advance a political ideology.

It is grossly irresponsible to invoke the First Amendment in such contexts. But we are witnessing an increasing tendency to use the First Amendment to unravel ordinary business regulations. This is heartbreaking at a time when we need a strong First Amendment for more important democratic purposes than using a constitutional noose to strangle basic economic regulation.

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. As the attorney general of New York correctly states, "Fraud is not protected by the First Amendment."

A number of high-profile legal scholars sent a letter last week to Chairman SMITH, condemning the subpoenas as "misguided." The letter argues that the subpoenas are "invalid and constitutionally impermissible." It turns out, according to these scholars, that the First Amendment actually works the other way:

The Subpoenas, and the threat of future sanctions, themselves threaten the First Amendment—directly inhibiting the rights of their recipients to speak, to associate and to petition state officials without interference from Congress.

A copy of the legal scholars' letter to Chairman SMITH can be accessed at the Yale Law School website at <http://tinyurl.com/yaleletter>.

Rhode Island attorney general Peter Kilmartin and his colleagues have also urged Chairman SMITH to withdraw the subpoenas. "Your interference in our colleagues' work ignores a 'vital consideration' under our constitutional system of dual sovereignty; the preservation of comity between the federal government and the states."

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that a copy of the Attorney General's letter to Chairman SMITH be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

STATE OF MARYLAND,
OFFICE OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL,
Baltimore, MD, August 11, 2016.

Hon. LAMAR SMITH,
Chairman, Committee on Science, Space and Technology, Washington, DC.

DEAR CHAIRMAN SMITH: We write to express our profound concern with the subpoenas issued on July 13, 2016 to our colleagues, the attorneys general of Massachusetts and New York. Through these subpoenas, which we understand you issued without a vote of the Committee, you seek the production of materials developed by the attorneys general in the course of their ongoing respective investigations of potential violations by the ExxonMobil Corporation of state securities and consumer protection laws. You have framed this intervention as "vigorous oversight" of state attorneys general and their investigative work. Such oversight would exceed Congress' constitutional authority, and the July 13 subpoenas should therefore be withdrawn.

Your interference in our colleagues' work ignores a "vital consideration" under our constitutional system of dual sovereignty: the preservation of comity between the federal government and the states. See *Younger v. Harris*, 401 U.S. 37, 44-45 (1971). "Comity," Justice Black wrote for the Supreme Court in *Younger*, means "a proper respect for state functions, a recognition of the fact that the entire country is made up of a Union of separate state governments, and a continuance of the belief that the National Government will fare best if the States and their institutions are left free to perform their separate functions in their separate ways." *Id.* Any claim of a congressional right to "oversee" the work of state constitutional law enforcement officers in fulfilling their core responsibilities under state law disrupts this comity and tears at the essential fabric of our national Constitution.

As attorneys general, we each hold offices established in our states' constitutions or statutes. Our offices are critical to the functioning of our states' governments, and they have deep historical roots. Some of us, like the attorneys general of Massachusetts and New York, hold offices whose origins precede the founding of our country. The state attorney general has been described by the Florida courts, for example, as "the attorney and legal guardian of the people. . . . His duties pertain to the Executive Department of the State, and it is his duty to use means most effectual to the enforcement of the laws, and the protection of the people, whenever directed by the proper authority, or when occasion arises." *State of Florida v. Exxon Corp.*, 526 F.2d 266, 270 (5th Cir. 1976) (quoting *Attorney General v. Gleason*, 12 Fla. 190, 212 (Fla. 1868)) (holding that Attorney General of Florida had legal authority to pursue federal antitrust action against Exxon and other oil companies without authorization of government agencies allegedly injured by conduct at issue). Several state supreme courts, recognizing the broad discretion conferred on state attorneys general by state constitutions, have aptly described the office of attorney general as a "public trust." See, e.g., *Gleason*, 12 Fla. at 214; *Attorney General v. Morita*, 41 Haw. 1, 15 (Haw. Terr. 1955); *Commonwealth v. Burrell*, 7 Pa. 34, 39 (1847).

In fulfilling this public trust, we are each accountable in multiple ways to the people of our states. Most of us were elected directly to our offices by the people we serve. State legislatures write and enact most of the laws that our offices enforce, including securities and consumer protection laws like

the ones that give rise to the investigations in New York and Massachusetts that you have proposed to “oversee.” Moreover, we are accountable to the courts of our states, which, on innumerable occasions over the course of our states’ histories, have ruled both for and against us and our predecessors on issues of federal and state constitutional law, on issues of statutory interpretation, and on other issues.

“[O]ur Constitution establishes a system of dual sovereignty between the States and the Federal Government.” *Gregory v. Ashcroft*, 501 U.S. 452, 457 (1991). Under that system, the federal government is one of limited powers, and, under the Tenth Amendment, “[t]he powers not delegated to the United States by the Constitution, nor prohibited by it to the States, are reserved to the States respectively, or to the people.” It is fundamental to our system of dual sovereignty that, as the Supreme Court has said, “States are not mere political subdivisions of the United States.” *New York v. United States*, 505 U.S. 144, 188 (1992). Indeed, “State governments are neither regional offices nor administrative agencies of the Federal Government. The positions occupied by state officials appear nowhere on the Federal Government’s most detailed organizational chart. The Constitution instead ‘leaves to the several States a residuary and inviolable sovereignty.’” *Id.* (quoting *The Federalist* No. 39).

In light of our nation’s commitment to the preservation of a system of dual sovereignty, it is not surprising that, despite centuries of investigative and prosecutorial activity by state attorneys general in which constitutional objections have been raised, you have not identified a single valid precedent, from any period of our country’s history, for the “vigorous oversight” of state attorneys general that you are now proposing to undertake. Difficult enough are cases where Congress proposes to regulate subject matters arguably reserved to the states, and where there may be some analytical difficulty entailed in drawing “distinction[s] between what is truly national, and what is truly local.” *United States v. Morrison*, 529 U.S. 598, 617 (2000). Your investigation, though, would go further. The stated purpose of your investigation is to oversee state constitutional officers themselves and the manner in which they fulfill their responsibilities under state law. Who oversees state officials is a matter “of the most fundamental sort for a sovereign entity,” because it is “through the structure of its government” that “a State defines itself as sovereign.” *Gregory v. Ashcroft*, 501 U.S. at 460 (holding that Congress could not, through laws prohibiting age discrimination, regulate the retirement age for state judges). Our national Constitution and our respective states’ constitutions neither anticipate nor tolerate a structure under which Congress arrogates to itself the authority to oversee investigations conducted by state attorneys general.

Your proposed “vigorous oversight” does not merely interfere with our work and the work of our colleagues. You also purport to supplant the role of state legislatures and state courts. We cannot understand on what basis you seem to assume, for example, that state courts in Massachusetts will be unable to resolve the constitutional objections that ExxonMobil, through skilled counsel, has already lodged there. State courts, not Congress, are the appropriate arbiters of any state law claims brought by the attorneys general of Massachusetts and New York against ExxonMobil and of any constitutional objections that ExxonMobil might assert.

The Constitution establishes “a system in which there is sensitivity to the legitimate

interests of both State and National Governments, and in which the National Government, anxious though it may be to vindicate and protect federal rights and federal interests, always endeavors to do so in ways that will not unduly interfere with the legitimate activities of the States.” *Younger*, 401 U.S. at 44. Your proposed oversight of state constitutional officers cannot be squared with these essential principles of federalism, nor can your attempt to oversee the resolution of alleged constitutional issues arising from the ongoing investigative activities of state attorneys general undertaken under state law. We therefore urge you to withdraw your subpoenas, refrain from attempting to exercise further oversight, and allow state attorneys general and state courts to perform their constitutionally prescribed roles.

Sincerely,

Brian E. Frosh, Maryland Attorney General; George Jepsen, Connecticut Attorney General; Douglas Chin, Hawaii Attorney General; Jim Hood, Mississippi Attorney General; Peter F. Kilmartin, Rhode Island Attorney General; Kamala D. Harris, California Attorney General; Karl A. Racine, District of Columbia Attorney General; Janet T. Mills, Maine Attorney General; Ellen F. Rosenblum, Oregon Attorney General; William H. Sorrell, Vermont Attorney General; Mark R. Herring, Virginia Attorney General; Bob Ferguson, Washington Attorney General.

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. Congressional investigations and hearings have a unique ability to focus a nation’s attention and bring facts of public importance to light. These subpoenas, however, appear intended to impede lawful State investigations. They do not advance the First Amendment, they trample on it.

Senator WARREN and I offered a suggestion to the House committee in our Washington Post piece:

If this House Committee is so concerned about the First Amendment rights of ExxonMobil, call a hearing, invite ExxonMobil executives to testify, and give them the opportunity to speak. What better way to protect a person’s right to speak freely than to give that person a forum to speak, right here in Congress?

They can come in, say whatever they want to say, and answer questions. I know I would love to hear what they have to say.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Louisiana.

TRIBUTE TO DAVID DOSS AND NICOLE HEBERT

Mr. VITTER. Mr. President, I rise to honor two of my longest serving staff members who have been tremendous team leaders in our office: David Doss, my State director, and Nicole Hebert, my deputy State director. They are both, sadly, departing the Senate later this month to start exciting new careers.

Nicole Hebert started with our team when I was first running for the U.S. Senate in 2004. Nicole is a Lafayette native and a native of the Acadiana region—or, Cajun country, as it is known—which was a key battleground in our election in 2004, in part because we were running against a local Cajun candidate in our jungle primary who

was supported by my predecessor who was also from Acadiana. With Nicole’s help, we shocked the entire State that year, winning with over 50 percent of the vote in the primary, forgoing the need for any runoff and winning Acadiana against a Cajun candidate—and Nicole was a big, important part of that victory.

Nicole and her husband Tommy and Nicole’s parents Lynne and Joey Durel were all incredibly helpful then and ever since then in helping me navigate the region and have always made me—as a guy from southeast Louisiana—feel right at home in that important part of the State.

Nicole, Tommy, and Lynne have all been on my staff at one point or another, and all of them were just great at helping me loosen up, take off my tie, and relax. They were also great at helping explain the Boudreaux and Thibodaux jokes that everyone was laughing so hard at and I could barely even understand them.

In Acadiana politics, you are nobody unless you are invited to a supper hosted by somebody named Trey, T-boy—or something like that, and I can’t even count how many of those informal suppers I have been to and enjoyed with Nicole and her family. I will tell you, I have experienced some of the best food in the world at those great events—boudin, crawfish pie, etouffe, and alligator sauce piquante—and, of course, all the festivals in Acadiana. I have been on so many pickup trucks and firetrucks—including an infamous one that broke down in the mud—for all of those Acadiana festivals: the Rice Festival, the Sugar Festival, the Frog Festival, the Crawfish Festival, and the Shrimp and Petroleum Festival. The fun list goes on and on.

Even though it is technically work, I certainly enjoyed all that time with Nicole and the Hebert family, and often found myself with a stomach cramp when I left the region, not because I ate or drank too much—although that happened too—but because I was always laughing so hard in their company.

Nicole and Tommy, their parents, and their two girls Hannah and Meredith, whom I have really enjoyed watching grow up, have all been a huge part of our Vitter family life. Wendy and I count them as dear friends, and we certainly will keep up with them through the rest of our lives.

David Doss, our State director, was one of my earliest hires when I was first elected to the U.S. House. He is my State director and before that served as my district director in the U.S. House. I know all of our colleagues here can attest to the fact that having a great State director on top of things, really managing the State offices properly, is a key element of success in any Senate office.

State directors are on the frontlines of everything. They always have to know what is on constituents’ minds

and what is happening around the State, and David has proven one of the great State directors in the country.

We have dealt with more than our share of disasters in Louisiana, and there is no one else I would have guiding our office through all that than David. Following Katrina, he organized a mobile office so our State staff could get around to impacted areas. That continued following other disasters. After the BP oilspill, David organized an incredibly effective and efficient casework operation to help assist people with those important claims.

David does it all. He has never been above any task, from seeing casework all the way through to the best possible outcome, to answering phones, to sorting through the mail when necessary, even to helping drive and getting me around the State.

David manages our seven State offices—which, by the way, is more than any other Senator from our State has ever had. We have an office in the seven biggest metropolitan locations around the State. So that is no easy task for him to manage. He has to coordinate our staff's driving schedule from New Orleans to Lake Charles, to Shreveport, to Monroe—all that in the same day sometimes—to get me to every parish, every Congress, for town-hall meetings, a pledge I made when I first ran for the Senate in 2004.

Others have chosen to fly on private jets to get around the State, but David always organized for us to drive each leg of each journey to save taxpayer dollars and so we can see what is really happening on the ground in every parish of our great State. Sometimes David would be doing that driving himself.

There was one time, of course, when we had to take away David's driving privileges for a while after he backed into a street sign with me in the car, but don't worry, no injuries—except possibly to David's pride for a while. Other than that minor accident, I would describe David's leadership of our State staff as really steady—a great leading, guiding influence, always a steady hand, always has an open line of communication, always listens well, always leads with that reassuring, steady hand.

There are very few community meetings, ribbon cuttings, or luncheons, or events all around our State where we don't have our State staff in attendance, and David has really helped build and run that well-oiled State staff machine and that well-oiled constituent service machine.

I have often said, the most fulfilling parts of my career are the relationships and friendships Wendy and I have built, including with our great staff. Wendy and I often consider staff an extension of our family. That is absolutely true for David and his wife Anne Mary and their daughters Julie and Jennifer.

We wish them all the best as they start an exciting part of their lives. I

thank Nicole and David for their wonderful service to Louisiana and for their friendship. We wish them all the best again as they start new parts of their careers. They are great individuals, they are great team leaders, and they are also great representatives of a wonderful State staff.

I mentioned before we have seven offices around Louisiana. Each office has a strong presence in their regions and their communities. I think our State staff, in that presence, has created the gold standard for constituent service, in part because of David and Nicole's leadership, but we have also built a great team, without exception, in all seven of those offices. To me, success in Congress is not measured by how many bills or amendments you introduce or pass but how many people you help and impact in a positive way. And our staff has countless success stories through their important casework—really important casework wins—which sometimes actually changes people's lives in a major way for the better. It is because of this gold standard that our great State staff has developed that we decided to memorialize what we have collected as best practices in terms of constituent service. We are putting that into a guidebook related to constituent service, and I will be sending that guidebook to all of the major candidates who are running to fill this Senate seat. In the guidebook, we will go through those best practices on constituent casework, on helping people and organizations in the State navigate the Federal process applying for grants and the like. As to the important need of being open and accessible, how a Senate office can do that effectively, and maintaining constant lines of communication with our fellow Louisiana citizens, all of those best practices and good ideas will be going into this guidebook that will be available to my successor.

Again, I want to thank David and Nicole and our entire State staff team for their years of dedicated service and success serving, really going above and beyond in serving the people of Louisiana.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. SULLIVAN). The Senator from Nebraska.

THE ECONOMY

Mrs. FISCHER. Mr. President, I rise today to call attention to a very troubling issue, and we hear about it often. Sadly, there is a lack of leadership from the executive branch with regard to it. I am talking about the state of the American economy. Many families across Nebraska and across our Nation are worried. Whether they are hard-working parents trying to make ends meet or grandparents who are concerned about their grandchildren's future, there is no shortage of anxiety.

As many of my colleagues have pointed out, the economy is not recovering quickly enough. In fact, we are slogging through the slowest economic recovery since the 1960s. By way of ref-

erence, in 1961 Kennedy was President, a gallon of gas cost 31 cents, and Roy Orbison was in Billboard's top five.

In every economic recovery since that time, the American economy grew an average of 3.7 percent per year. Since 2009, however, this growth has averaged a mere 2.1 percent per year. This year, it slowed to just 1 percent. Last quarter, the economy grew by a pitiful 1.2 percent. Again, things are not getting better quickly enough.

There are some real obstacles before us. The share of Americans in the workforce has fallen below 63 percent. That is nearly three percentage points below where we were when the recovery began. Another concern is the growing number of expensive and burdensome regulations. Rulemaking under the Obama administration has skyrocketed. Federal regulations cost an estimated \$1.9 trillion per year. That is more than \$15,000 for each American household. These figures are worrisome.

Here is one that should truly be frightening for us. At the same time, we have seen our national debt reach a staggering \$19.5 trillion. Just last year, the United States spent \$223 billion, or 6 percent of the Federal budget, to pay interest on that national debt. This year, the nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office estimates that our deficit will be \$590 billion. This means that we are going to be spending almost \$600 billion more than we take in.

If we don't change course, the CBO estimates that these deficits are going to skyrocket over the next decade, reaching \$1 trillion in 2024, and they will only continue to grow from there. These numbers paint us a very dark picture, but I do have some good news. There is still time for us to change course. In fact, this body has taken several good steps.

Since taking office, I have worked with my colleagues to reduce some wasteful spending and some burdensome regulations. In 2015, I introduced the Grants Oversight and New Efficiency Act, or the GONE Act. This bill, which was signed into law in January, will save millions of dollars by closing expired grant accounts and increasing oversight over Federal grant programs.

I have also introduced and pushed for votes on several waste-cutting amendments during the appropriations process, including one to wind down an outdated and ineffective stimulus-era program. These are good steps, and here are a few others. We passed a highway bill, which will provide much needed certainty for States, businesses, families, and the traveling public. By prioritizing our infrastructure, we are investing in our economy's ability to grow.

In the same vein, last week, we passed the Water Resources Development Act. This is another key infrastructure bill that will enable our economy to grow by modernizing our ports and our waterways. So we do have tools available for us to meet these fiscal challenges.

We have to exercise restraint, and we have to exercise that restraint among ourselves. The appropriations process is a critical way for us to do this. It is the only way that our citizens can truly hold their elected representatives accountable for this spending. It allows the American people to see the true priorities of their elected representatives.

There is one last point before I close. Reducing the national debt does not mean that we stop investing. It simply forces us to make smarter choices. Some things we need to prioritize, and we know what those are. We need to keep our families and our communities safe. We must invest in infrastructure to promote commerce and grow this economy. We must reduce wasteful spending and prioritize prudent spending. We must reduce the national debt. We must get government out of the way so opportunities can be created for our families and for our young people, but we have to be responsible stewards of taxpayer money. We must make those responsible choices.

I believe that our very best days as a nation are before us, and that is because of my unwavering faith in the fundamental goodness, tenacity, and the creativity of the American people. I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. MURPHY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

MOTION TO DISCHARGE—S.J. RES. 39

Mr. MURPHY. Mr. President, on behalf of Senator PAUL and pursuant to the Arms Export Control Act of 1976, I move to discharge the Foreign Relations Committee from further consideration of S.J. Res. 39, relating to the disapproval of the proposed foreign military sale to the Government of Saudi Arabia.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The motion is now pending.

Under the previous order, there will be 3 hours of debate on the motion, divided between the proponents and opponents, with the Senator from Kentucky controlling 30 minutes of proponent time and the Senator from Connecticut controlling 15 minutes of proponent time.

The Senator from Connecticut.

Mr. MURPHY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the time during quorum calls on the motion be equally divided between the proponents and the opponents.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. MURPHY. Mr. President, I am going to speak briefly in support of the resolution. Senator LEE, a cosponsor of this resolution, is on the floor, and he will speak after I do.

Let me say at the outset that I believe in a strong U.S. global presence. I

believe the United States is at its best when it is a global leader. We can and we should be a force for good and for peace in the world.

I also believe, quite frankly, that peace comes through strength. I don't apologize for the size of our military budget, nor do I think it would be wise for this Congress to give up this country's massive military edge over every global adversary and friend. Having the world's biggest, baddest military keeps us safe, and, frankly, it keeps a lot of our friends safe as well.

My last stipulation before I talk about the resolution would be this: I also believe there are times when we should use that military power. There are times when war or military action is just. If you want to provide safe harbor for terrorists who plan a massive attack against this country, such as the Taliban in Afghanistan, then they can expect a visit from the U.S. Army.

But increasingly we all have to reconcile with the fact that there are more and more limitations on the effectiveness of U.S. military power. Today, our adversaries and our enemies practice something we call asymmetric warfare, which means they concede our conventional military advantage and use other means and methods to exert power and project strength. China does it through economic aid, Russia does it through bribery and the extension of its natural resources to its neighbors, and ISIL does it through terror and through the perversion of religion. Yet this country and this Congress continue to believe that most conflicts around the globe can be solved with just a little bit more American military hardware.

That is what brings us here today to talk about this arms sale to Saudi Arabia, particularly in the context of the ongoing conflict inside Yemen—a civil war inside Yemen in which the United States has become a participant.

This is a picture from war-ravaged Yemen—an ongoing humanitarian disaster. We don't have the full extent of the numbers, but there have already been thousands of civilians killed. If we talk to Yemenis, they will tell us that this is perceived inside Yemen as not a Saudi-led bombing campaign, which it is broadly advertised as in the newspapers, but as a U.S. bombing campaign or, at best, a U.S.-Saudi bombing campaign.

There is a U.S. imprint on every civilian death inside Yemen which is radicalizing the people of this country against the United States. Why is this? Well, it is because, while the conflict inside Yemen started as a civil war—the Houthis overrunning the government inside Sana'a—the Saudis and a coalition of other Gulf States have entered the conflict, largely through air operations, to try to push the Houthis back, and they have asked for our assistance, which we have given, and we have given it in substantial means and methods. We provide the bombs, we provide the refueling planes, and we provide the intelligence. There really is no way this bombing campaign could happen without U.S. participation.

The United States is at war in Yemen today. The United States is at war in Yemen today, and this Congress has not debated that engagement. This Congress has not debated that war. It is yet another unauthorized U.S. military engagement overseas.

But the scope of this disaster for the purposes of U.S. security interests is not just the radicalization of the Yemen people against the United States or the thousands of people who have been killed but also the fact that this war has given ground—an opportunity for Al Qaeda and ISIS to grow—grow by leaps and bounds.

Let's be honest. Our first responsibility here is to protect this country from attack, and the most likely arm of Al Qaeda that would have the means or the inclination to attack the United States is the branch that exists inside Yemen. Their recruitment has grown by multiples over the course of this conflict. For a period of time, AQAP was able to use this conflict to grab control of a major port city inside Yemen, which radically changed the ability of AQAP to recruit and to grow their capacity to do harm outside of Yemen, because they had control of resources and taxation inside this city.

One would think that if the United States was providing all of these resources to the Saudi-led coalition, that some of them would be used to try to push back on ISIS's growth or AQAP's growth inside Yemen, but the exact opposite has happened. None of the Saudi bombs are dropping on AQAP; they are all dropping on Houthi targets and civilian targets. So we are arming the Saudis to fight an enemy—the Houthis—whom we have not declared war against, and the Saudis are not using those weapons to fight our sworn enemy whom we have declared war against: Al Qaeda. So the civilian casualties mount, ISIS and Al Qaeda grow, yet this is the first time we have had the opportunity to discuss the wisdom of this engagement.

We begged the Saudis to change their conduct. We have asked them to target Al Qaeda. To the extent that Al Qaeda is shrinking a bit, it is not because the Saudis have targeted them, it is because other players in the region—the Emirates—have targeted them. We begged the Saudis to stop bombing civilians. Yet in a 72-hour period earlier this summer, the Saudi-led coalition bombed another Doctors Without Borders facility, a school, and the principal's house next door. We give them targets that they should stay away from because they are key parts of routes to bring humanitarian relief in a country that is ravaged by famine, and they still hit those targets even after we told them to stay away. We begged the Saudis to change their behavior inside this war, and they haven't listened.

But it is not the only time they haven't listened. The fact is, if you are serious about stopping the flow of extremist recruiting across this globe, then you have to be serious about the very real fact that the Wahhabi-Salafist branch of Islam that is spread around the world by Saudi Arabia and their Wahhabi allies is part of the problem.

In 1956, there were 244 madrassas in Pakistan; today there are over 24,000. These schools are multiplying all over the globe. Conservative Salafist imams and mosques are spreading all across the world. Don't get me wrong, these schools and Mosques by and large don't teach violence directly. They aren't the minor leagues for Al Qaeda and ISIS, but they do teach a version of Islam that leads very nicely into an anti-Shia, anti-western militancy. We begged the Saudis to stop setting up these conservative Wahhabi operations in parts of the Middle East, in the Balkans, in Indonesia. Again, they haven't listened.

Just take the example of Kosovo. Kosovo 10 years ago would never have been a place that ISIS would have gone to recruit people into the fight inside Syria, but today it is one of the hotbeds of recruitment. It is not a coincidence that during the same period of time the Saudis and Wahhabis spent millions of dollars there, trying to convert Muslims to their brand of religion—a brand of religion that essentially says that everybody who doesn't believe what we believe is an infidel, that the crusades never ended, and that the obligation of a true Muslim is to find a way to fight back against any brand of the religion that doesn't match ours.

So for those who are going to vote for this arms sale, who are essentially going to endorse our current state of the relationship with Saudi Arabia and our Gulf State allies, just ask yourselves if we can really defeat terrorism if we remain silent on the primary progenitor of this brand of Islam that feeds into extremism. How can you say you are serious about strangling ISIL when the textbooks that are produced inside Saudi Arabia are the very same textbooks that are handed out to recruit suicide bombers?

If we really want to cut off extremism at its source, then we can't keep closing our eyes to the money that flows out of Saudi Arabia and the Gulf States into this conservative Salafist missionary movement around the world.

This arms sale is relevant to both of these questions—changing the war inside Yemen and sending a message that this export of the building blocks of extremism cannot continue. Why? Because the main part of this arms sale is a replacement of battle-damaged tanks—tanks that were likely in part damaged in the conduct of this war. It represents a piece of a very long ramp-up of arms sales into Saudi Arabia.

The numbers are pretty staggering. This administration has sold about six

to eight times the number of arms to Saudi Arabia than the last administration did, and the Saudis do listen. They do pay attention to what we say here. They don't like the fact that there are Republicans and Democrats critiquing this relationship. They will not like the fact that there will be votes against this arms sale. So even if it ultimately doesn't become law—which is unlikely, given the fact that even if it passes, the President could veto it—this could impact both of these questions, the conduct of the war in Yemen and the conduct of the export of Wahhabism around the globe.

Lastly, let me make the case that rejecting or voting against this arms sale is not going to end or even permanently damage our relationship with Saudi Arabia. We are allies. We will continue to be allies. Our common bond was forged during the Cold War when American and Saudi leaders found common ground in the fight against communism. The Saudis helped ensure that the Russians never got a meaningful foothold in the Middle East. Today, this unofficial detente that exists between Sunni nations and Israel in the region is part of the product of Saudi-led diplomacy. There have been many high-profile examples of deep U.S.-Saudi cooperation in the fight against ISIL and Al Qaeda, notwithstanding these critiques. More generally, our partnership with Saudi Arabia, the most powerful and richest country in the Arab world is an important bridge to the Islamic community—a testament to the fact that we can seek cooperation and engagement with governments in the Middle East and people worldwide, which is a direct rebuttal to this idea the terrorists spread that asserts we are at war with Islam.

This is not an either-or question, but we are strategic allies, which is different from being a values-based alliance. That means that when our strategic goals occasionally depart from one another, then we shouldn't be obligated to continue our cooperation on that particular front. The Saudis' guiding foreign policy goal is to gain regional supremacy over Iran. We certainly prefer a Middle East with more Saudi friends than Iranian friends; there should be no doubt about that. But our guiding foreign policy goal in that region is not for the Saudis to win the broadening proxy war with Iran; it is to protect our country from attack by terrorist groups that are metastasizing in Syria, Iraq, and now at worrying rates inside Yemen.

Today, our participation in the war inside Yemen is making us more vulnerable by attacks from AQAP and ISIS, not less vulnerable. Our bombs, our intelligence, our spotters, and our refueling planes are certainly helping the Saudis project power in the region, but it is fueling an arms race between Shia and Sunni nations that has no logical end other than mutual destruction, increasing chaos, and more un-

governable space for groups that want to attack the United States.

Said another way, is this really the right moment for the United States to be sending record numbers of arms into the Middle East?

Do we have any evidence from past conflicts in Afghanistan or the Iran and Iraq wars that more U.S. weapons end up in less, rather than more, bloodshed—an abbreviated rather than an elongated war?

It is time for the United States to press pause on our arms sales to Saudi Arabia. Let's make sure that the war in Yemen doesn't continue to spiral downward, jeopardizing U.S. national security interests. Let's press the Saudis to get serious about spending more time as firefighters and less time as arsonists, as they say, in the global fight against terrorism.

Let's ask ourselves whether we are comfortable with the United States getting slowly, predictably, and all too quietly dragged into yet another war in the Middle East. What will it take for this country to learn its lesson?

I thank the Presiding Officer and the body for the time, and I yield back.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Minnesota.

Mr. FRANKEN. Mr. President, I thank Senator MURPHY, Senator PAUL, and Senator LEE for their leadership on this very important issue.

Since the Saudi-led coalition started a bombing campaign in Yemen in 2015, there has been an average of 13 civilian casualties each day, according to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights. This means that thousands of civilians have been killed or wounded in the U.S.-backed war in Yemen. This is unacceptable. People all across this country have been outraged at how the Saudis have conducted this war and believe that the United States should not acquiesce or support such conduct.

Over the last decade, the United States has sold the Saudis over \$100 billion in arms. The United States has also supported the Saudi-led coalition with air-to-air refueling sorties, intelligence sharing, and military advisory assistance. That kind of support should not go along with acceptance of the Saudi disregard for innocent human lives and innocent civilian lives.

The legislation we will be voting on later today is a disapproval resolution regarding a \$1.15 billion arms sale. The very fact that we are voting on it today sends a very important message to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia that we are watching their actions closely and that the United States is not going to turn a blind eye to the indiscriminate killing of men, women, and children.

Again, I would like to thank Senators MURPHY, PAUL, and LEE for their leadership, and I urge my colleagues to support this important piece of legislation.

Thank you, Mr. President.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Utah.

Mr. LEE. Mr. President, I rise today to lend my support and urge my colleagues to lend theirs to S.J. Res. 39, offered by my friend Senator RAND PAUL of Kentucky. The purpose of this particular resolution is to reconsider the billion-dollar arms sale between the United States and Saudi Arabia that was negotiated by the two governments earlier this year.

Under U.S. law, any arms sale approved by the State Department will go into effect within 30 days after that deal has been finalized, absent passage of a resolution of disapproval to prevent it from taking effect. That is exactly what Senator PAUL's resolution aims to do. If passed by the Senate and the House, the resolution would raise formal objections to the sale of \$1.15 billion worth of weapons and military equipment to the Government of Saudi Arabia.

Notice that there are Senators from both sides of the aisle working to pass this resolution of disapproval, supporting it in speeches and voting on it hopefully later today. It was introduced by a fellow Republican, and I am proud to join three of my Democratic colleagues as original cosponsors: Senator CHRIS MURPHY from Connecticut, from whom we heard just moments ago; Senator AL FRANKEN of Minnesota, from whom we heard after we heard from Senator MURPHY; and Senator MARTIN HEINRICH of New Mexico.

Some might call us strange bedfellows—two conservative Republicans and three liberal Democrats working together to achieve the same goal. But this observation misses the point entirely. Each one of us may have their own unique justification for supporting this resolution, but there is nothing strange about that; it simply proves that there are many reasons to consider and to reconsider this deal with Saudi Arabia.

One of those reasons and the basis for my support of Senator PAUL's resolution is that there is no conclusive evidence that the Saudi arms deal will in fact advance the strategic and security interests of the United States. In fact, there is evidence that points in the opposite direction. We know that Saudi Arabia is heavily involved in the civil war that is raging at this moment in Yemen—a conflict that has left a humanitarian crisis of staggering proportions in its wake and continues to do so. We know that the Saudi military will use the equipment included in this deal—everything from machine guns to grenade launchers to armored vehicles and tanks—to increase its own engagement in that seemingly intractable conflict. What we don't know is exactly how America's involvement in the civil war in Yemen serves our national security interests and protects the American people.

I have no problem in principle with the United States approving the sale of weapons and military equipment to

foreign governments when it is in our interest to do so. I certainly am not categorically opposed to selling arms to the Saudi Government. Saudi Arabia has long been an American ally in a very volatile region of the world, and I believe strengthening that alliance should be a priority for our foreign and military policy in the Middle East, but the fact that Saudi Arabia is an ally with whom we have a track record of selling arms is not in and of itself a sufficient reason to endorse this particular deal. It is not a reason that this deal should move through, should take effect without so much as a whimper from Members of Congress who might feel the need to raise possible concerns—concerns that relate to our own national security.

Yes, we want our allies to be strong. Yes, we want our allies to be capable of defending themselves. Yes, sometimes this means that we should offer them assistance in times of need. But the first and most fundamental responsibility of the U.S. Government is not to satisfy the requests of our allies reflexively, unflinchingly, and without asking acute questions; rather, the fundamental responsibility—the first job of the U.S. Government—is to protect the lives and liberties of the American people. That is where we need to be focused.

Now, the Government of Saudi Arabia clearly believes that intervening in this civil war in Yemen and participating in the decades-long sectarian conflict underlying that civil war in Yemen is in the best interest of the Saudi people. I don't doubt that, and it is not my place to question it, even if I did doubt it.

That is why the Saudi military has been fighting in Yemen since it first launched its intervention in March 2015. But can the same be said of the U.S. Government? Is intervening in this civil war a national priority for the American people? Is intervening in that civil war in our national security interest? Is it something that is going to make the American people safer?

Astoundingly, these are questions that have never been fully discussed and certainly have never been fully debated in this institution—an institution that likes to call itself and loves to be referred to as the world's greatest deliberative body.

This is more of an abdication of responsibility by Congress. It is more than just that. It is a national security hazard. It is not just that we are abdicating. It is not just that we are not doing something we are supposed to do. We are making things more dangerous than we need to.

The Framers of our Constitution gave important and exclusive foreign policy powers to the legislative branch because our Framers believed that the process of defining America's national interests and developing a foreign policy to pursue those interests must involve the participation of the people's representatives in Congress.

But alas, in recent years, Congress, in general, and the Senate, in particular, have happily taken a back seat to the executive branch in debating, developing, and defending to the public our Nation's foreign policy and grand strategy in the Middle East. That explains how it is possible that our military has actively supported the Saudi military's intervention in Yemen, including hundreds of air-to-air refueling sorties at a time when our military leaders unanimously contend that they are suffering from readiness and personnel shortfalls. It explains how it is possible that the U.S. military would be actively involved in the civil war in Yemen, even though many security experts point out that by supporting Saudi Arabia in Saudi Arabia's fight against the Houthis, we could be unintentionally assisting Al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula and ISIS affiliates in Yemen.

I urge my colleagues today to support this resolution of disapproval. Let us pause our intervention in this foreign conflict and show the country—show our country—that the legislative branch can fulfill its obligations to the American people faithfully, that we can openly and thoughtfully evaluate our interventions abroad, and that we are focused on protecting the security, safety, and interests of the American people above all others.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mrs. ERNST). The majority leader.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Madam President, today the Senate will consider a motion to discharge a resolution of disapproval from the Foreign Relations Committee. I oppose that motion because I believe it would harm our Nation's long-term strategic interests in the Persian Gulf and in the broader Middle East.

It would further damage our alliance and our partnership with the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia at a time when our moderate Sunni Arab allies are questioning whether our Nation is able to meet our traditional commitment to the region. The resolution would also ignore the shared interests we have with Saudi Arabia in combating Al Qaeda and ISIS.

Were this resolution of disapproval ever to be adopted, it would further convince the world that the United States is retreating, not only from its commitments but also as the guarantor of the international order we worked to create after the Second World War.

I will move to table this motion and encourage all of my colleagues to support the motion. We are nearing the end of the Obama administration. The next President will have a stark choice upon assuming office—whether to continue the drawdown of America's conventional military power across the globe or to restore our warfighting capabilities to both renew our alliances and restore America to its position as the guarantor of the international security order.

After nearly 8 years, the President's approach to foreign policy has become all too clear—to end the war on terror, to draw down our conventional forces and capabilities, and to deploy special operations forces in economy-of-force train-and-assist missions across the globe.

The essence of this foreign policy was captured in his speech at West Point in May of 2014. In that speech, the President described a network of partnerships from South Asia to the Sahel, to be funded by a \$5 billion counterterrorism partnership fund for which Congress has yet to receive a viable plan. In those cases where indigenous forces prove insufficient and a need for direct action arises, the President announced his intention to resort to the use of armed unmanned aerial vehicles for strikes, as has been done in Yemen and Somalia.

So by deploying special operations forces for train-and-equip missions, the President hoped to manage the diffuse threat posed by Al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula, Boko Haram, terrorist networks inside of Libya that now threaten Egypt, the al-Nusra Front, the Taliban, ISIL, and other terrorist groups.

The concept of operations allowed the President to continue the force structure cuts to the conventional forces and sought to manage the threat from global terrorism. He envisioned no need to reverse the harmful damage of defense sequestration, to rebuild our conventional and nuclear forces, or to accept that leaving behind residual forces in Iraq and Afghanistan was a means by which this Nation preserves the strategic gains that we have made through sacrifice.

The threat of some of these Al Qaeda affiliates, associated groups, or independent terrorist organizations has outpaced the President's economy-of-force concept. In some cases, the host nation's military which we had trained and equipped had proven inadequate to defeat the insurgency in question, as was the case with AQAP, the Taliban, or ISIL.

The Obama administration never answered the question: What was to be done when the host nation's force we trained for counterterrorism was incapable of counterinsurgency—Iraq, Libya, Yemen? The efforts of the Department of Defense to train a moderate Syrian opposition never provided sufficient reasons for the President to rethink the basic strategy.

The President's concept of operations countenanced a persistent, enduring terrorist threat from AQAP, the Taliban, and other groups in those countries where insufficient ground combat power could be generated by the force that we trained.

In Riyadh, our traditional long-standing ally Saudi Arabia warned of Iran's efforts to arm and support Shia proxies in Syria, in Yemen, and in Lebanon and to foment unrest across the region, all of which was lost on the White House.

Instead, they were called "free riders," and Saudi Arabia's concerns with what a Muslim Brotherhood government in Cairo, instability in Libya, and the slaughter of Sunnis within Syria would mean for the region were completely ignored. The Obama administration has sounded an uncertain trumpet, but the words that resounded in Saudi Arabia and across the region were the commitment to our allies—that in negotiating with Iran to end its nuclear weapons program, no deal is better than a bad deal.

Well, this proved not to be true. The administration accepted the bad deal, and in its negotiation with Iran, the administration made concession after concession after concession: allowing Iran to retain a nuclear enrichment program, allowing for the retention of working centrifuges and a research and development program, providing financial relief and support, and lending legitimacy to the world's chief state sponsor of terror.

Under any net assessment, Iran has emerged from the nuclear deal with the Obama administration stronger—stronger than before the deal. The funds derived from the lifting of sanctions enable Iran to invest in proxy forces and conventional capabilities, such as advanced air defense systems, and to threaten Israel and Saudi Arabia.

Even more consequential is the fact that the Obama administration's single-minded pursuit of achieving and preserving the deal has held the other elements of our foreign policy toward Iran hostage. Iran is free to harass American vessels within the Persian Gulf, to test ballistic missiles, and to fund proxy forces.

After agreeing to the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, the President gathered the leaders of the Gulf Cooperation Council at Camp David. At that meeting, our President made commitments to those allies that we would help them in building their respective defense capabilities.

A vote in support of this resolution today undermines that commitment made by the President to help the Saudis. Our allies in the region, especially Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates, came to understand that after the fall of the Mubarak government, the decapitation of the government in Libya, and civil war in Syria, they must act in pursuit of their own sovereign interests, whether the United States would lead or not.

The specific foreign military sale in question here is for Abrams tank structures to Saudi Arabia. We have been selling ground combat equipment to Saudi Arabia for decades—for decades. There is no evidence—none—that the Saudis have used the Abrams tanks in ground combat within Yemen. These systems have been used along the Saudi Arabia border to defend against Houthi incursions.

The United States is actively working to improve Saudi targeting capa-

bility and to deliver humanitarian relief to the people of Yemen. So let us also remember that denying the sale of Abrams tank structures will simply lead some of our allies to pursue weapon systems from other countries.

Let me say that again. The Saudis don't have to buy this equipment from us. They can buy it from somebody else. So this motion comes at a singularly unfortunate time and would serve to convince Saudi Arabia and all other observers that the United States does not live up to its commitments.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Arizona.

Mr. MCCAIN. Madam President, let's be clear about what the arms sale is all about. It is about giving a nation that is under attack by an Iranian-sponsored militia the arms that it needs to defend its people and its territory.

The Houthi militia, which is Iran's proxy in Yemen, is attacking Saudi Arabia's southern border. It has carried out hundreds of cross-border raids into Saudi Arabia and has fired numerous missiles deep into Saudi territory. Make no mistake, this aggression is fueled by the Iranians.

Earlier this year, the United States seized a shipment of arms bound for the Houthi militia. Have no doubt that the Houthi militia are the clients and the stooges and the agents of Iran, which is attempting to take over control of Yemen, which is an important nation, particularly because of its geographic location on the Straits of Hormuz.

Have no doubt about what the situation would be strategically if the Iranian-sponsored Houthis controlled Yemen. Have no doubt about the threat that it is to the United States of America and to freedom of navigation.

Houthi aggression against Saudi Arabia has displaced over 75,000 Saudis and killed hundreds of civilians. If militias were attacking our borders and launching missiles into our territory and our friends refused to help us defend ourselves, we would certainly question the value of that friendship. This is why this sale is more important than just a sale. It is a message.

The sale will give Saudi Arabia tanks it has used to defend its own country from Houthi attacks. The United States has no evidence that Saudi Arabia has used the tanks outside of Saudi territory. In fact, 20 of the tanks in the case would be intended to replace those damaged by Houthi artillery while the tanks were on Saudi territory, deployed in defensive positions to counter offensive Houthi cross-border raids. These tanks will be reviewed and monitored like all U.S.-origin defense articles to ensure they are used in the manner intended or consistent with legal obligations and foreign policy goals and values.

I say to my colleagues that blocking this sale of tanks will be interpreted by our gulf partners—not just Saudi Arabia—as another sign that the United States of America is abandoning our

commitment to the region and is an unreliable security partner. That is what this vote is all about. The nations in the region already have that impression because President Obama has reneged on his promise made at the U.S.-Gulf Cooperation Council meeting at Camp David in May of 2015 to fast-track arms transfers.

As we support the Saudis in the defense of their territorial integrity, we do not refrain from expressing our concern about the war in Yemen and how it is being conducted. We remain concerned by the high number of casualties resulting from the fighting. We have repeatedly expressed our deepest concern about the ongoing strikes that have killed and injured civilians, the heavy toll paid by the Yemeni people, and the urgent and compelling need for humanitarian assistance. There has been some progress, including the establishment of the Joint Incident Assessment Team, a commission to investigate civilian casualties.

But we cannot forget that an Iranian-backed, Houthi-controlled Yemen will be a chaotic, unstable place ripe for exploitation not only by Iran but also by Al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula and ISIL. That is why it must be our goal and the goal of the international community to arrive at a political solution to bring stability and security back to Yemen. Saudi Arabia has been seeking such a solution.

The Saudis were cooperative and participated in good faith in the peace negotiations in Kuwait before those talks, unfortunately, broke down over Houthi intransigence. They have shown considerable restraint in not responding with airstrikes to Houthi cross-border attacks, which continue.

In the meantime, we must continue to support an important regional partner against Iran's destabilizing behavior in Yemen and beyond.

I say to my colleagues, this vote is more important than the sale of tanks. This vote is a message to our friends and our enemies alike. This message is that we will continue the commitment President Obama made at a meeting in 2015 with the nations in the region that we would expedite arms sales to them, not prohibit them. This is a message that one of the strongest forces against Al Qaeda in the region and other terrorist organizations is going to be allowed to acquire weapons with which to defend their sovereign nation.

This vote will resonate throughout the entire Middle East. That is why I hope my colleagues will understand that the importance of this vote transcends anything to do with military equipment. I urge my colleagues to vote against this resolution, and I urge my colleagues to vote overwhelmingly.

Madam President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. GRAHAM. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. GRAHAM. Madam President, I wish to speak for 10 minutes, and I request that the Presiding Officer let me know when that time expires.

This body, the Senate, is going to have a vote in a couple of hours about whether we should approve an arms sale to our friends in Saudi Arabia. I use the term "friends" because that is what I think they are when it comes to the efforts to win the war against terror.

Internal problems in Saudi Arabia are real. They need to modernize the way they do business. They have had double-dealing in the past of helping terrorist organizations. At the end of the day, the Mideast is a very complicated place, but here is what is not complicated: Saudi Arabia has shared intelligence with us that has made Americans safe. They have allowed us to use their air bases in times of conflict. They are all in against ISIL, and they are great allies against the ambitions of the Iranians. When you add up the pluses and the minuses of the relationship with Saudi Arabia, in my view, it is not close—the pluses outweigh the minuses.

To those who wish to sever this relationship, be careful what you wish for. Saudi Arabia is the center of gravity of the Islamic world. Most holy sites in Islam are in Saudi Arabia. I have met with the King, the Crown Prince, and the Deputy Crown Prince. They have shown a willingness to work with us at a time when we need partners. If you drive this good partner, Saudi Arabia, away, you will one day regret it.

This is what is going on in the Mideast. Iran is marching through the Mideast with terror. They are destabilizing the entire region. The Saudi Kingdom is not perfect, but they are aligned with us on the big issues when it comes to terrorism and pushing back against Iran.

The Iranian regime is controlled by a radical Ayatollah who openly chants and tweets that the State of Israel must be destroyed. This regime is in the hands of a religious Nazi. The Ayatollah in Iran controls everything. There are no moderate voices left there.

Since the deal with Iran has been signed regarding their nuclear program, they have test-fired four missiles in violation of U.N. resolutions. One of the missiles basically had in Hebrew "Israel must be destroyed." They constantly threaten our ally Israel. They have taken over four Arab capitals.

The Houthis, who threw out a pro-American government in Yemen by force of arms, is being supplied arms by the Iranians.

The \$150 billion the Iranian regime will receive in sanctions relief is finding its way into the hands of terrorist organizations. Hezbollah, a mortal

enemy of Israel, has been provided up to 300 new missiles with precision-guided technology by the Iranians to threaten the Jewish State. Assad wouldn't last 5 minutes without Iranian support. They have disrupted all of our gains inside of Iraq. They are influencing Baghdad in a very bad way.

When it comes to Yemen, when it comes to Iraq, and when it comes to Syria, Iran is creating havoc.

This body has a choice. We are talking about a \$1 billion package of armaments that will upgrade the Saudis' capability to fight common enemies such as Al Qaeda and ISIL more aggressively, and it will give them the military capability to challenge the increased threats to the region from Iran.

If we say no to the Saudis, not only will that be seen as a sleight by the Saudis, they will buy their arms somewhere else.

And if you want to talk about a body that would have things ass backwards, this would be the moment in history where you will be seen in history as not understanding the world. There are some of my colleagues on the other side who are worried about how the Saudis are using military force inside of Yemen to protect their borders from an Iranian intrusion that is being basically carried forward by the Houthis. There is an effort to bring about peace in Yemen, but Iran has empowered the Houthis to displace a pro-American, pro-Western government, creating havoc for the Saudis. They have dropped bombs on civilians. There is no way to conduct war without mistakes being made. We are trying to sell them new equipment, precision-guided weapons that will lessen civilian casualties when Saudi Arabia has to defend themselves.

I think it would be pretty odd for Members on the other side of the aisle, who almost unanimously supported the Iranian nuclear agreement, to give sanctions relief to an Ayatollah who on the day of the vote said he hopes to destroy Israel in 25 years and deny a weapons sale to somebody who is in the fight with you. Talk about ass-backwards: flush the Iranian regime with capabilities they have dreamed of to pursue a nuclear deal that I think is a nightmare for the region, and in the same context, within a matter of months, start denying Arab allies who are willing to fight the capability to fight.

If you want to send a signal to the Ayatollah that America is out of the fight and we no longer are a reliable ally, stop helping Saudi Arabia and the Gulf Arab States, who have been helping us, as imperfect as they may be. What a world we live in, where this body wants to be tough on Saudi Arabia because they are in a shooting war in Yemen, sponsored by the Iranians, right on their border, that we want to cut off military aid to them because of human rights violations, when the people on the other side are watching Iran

destroy the Mideast, threaten us, and create the possibility of a second holocaust for the Jewish people. Not one person on the other side has risen their hand to say: You know, maybe we should revisit sanctions on Iran based on what they have done since we signed the deal.

So here is the answer. The Iranians have test-fired four ballistic missiles, after signing the Iranian nuclear agreement with us, in violation of U.N. resolutions, and our response is to cut off weapons to Saudi Arabia. We haven't done a damn thing to send a signal to the Ayatollah: Hey, man, you are going to pay a price if you keep doing this.

The Iranians are shipping weapons to the Houthis, who have destroyed a pro-American government, creating havoc in the region inside of Yemen, and our response is to cut off weapons to the Saudi Arabians.

If you want to change the Mideast forever, do this. If you really want to tell everybody who has fought with America you are no longer a reliable ally, do this. If you want to tell the Russians we are going to cede authority and power to them, do this. The Russians are pulling for us. The Russians would like nothing better than for America to cut off arms sales and alliances with the Gulf Arab States, particularly Saudi Arabia, because that would give them the opportunity of a lifetime. If you care about the American homeland, you better put Iran in a box as soon as you can.

Here is my belief about the Iranians. Not only are they trying to take over four Arab capitals—and they have—they are developing ballistic missiles to deliver something. They are not going to put the Ayatollah in space, though I would like to do that myself. They are going to put something on top of that missile and I know exactly what it is and all the Arabs know what it is and the Israelis know what it is.

So at a time of great and clear conflict—and it is clear to me the Iranians are the bad guys and our allies in the Arab world, though imperfect, are still our allies—that we are going to send a signal to the radical regime in Tehran that we are going to roll back supporting our allies and do nothing about their provocative behavior would be a mistake for the ages.

I wish the body would have a different debate than we are having today. I wish somebody would come and talk about reimposing sanctions on the Iranians. They have captured American sailors and humiliated them. They are allies of Bashar Assad, who has butchered 450,000 of his own people. They are empowering Hezbollah, the mortal enemy of Israel. They are humiliating every force of good, and our response is to stand up and undercut an ally.

What a world we live in, where the United States Senate is considering stopping selling arms to somebody who would fight with us at a time when we are doing nothing to a country that has

called us the Great Satan—and if they could, they would destroy us—and have killed American soldiers by providing radical groups inside of Iraq with IEDs that have killed hundreds of American soldiers. Talk about a body and an idea that is ass-backwards, this is one for the ages.

To my friends inside of Saudi Arabia, I will push you to do better, and you need to look in the mirror about who you are, but I understand there are more pluses than there are minuses. To our enemies in Iran—who are not the Iranian people, it is the Ayatollah—as long as I am here with my colleagues, we are going to push back against you more, not less, we are going to help our Arab allies more, not less, as long as you are doing what you are doing.

To those who want to vote today to suspend this aid to Saudi Arabia, people in Iran will cheer you on.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Texas.

Mr. CORNYN. Madam President, while he is still on the floor, I just want to tell the Senator from South Carolina how much I appreciate his remarks. I agree with virtually everything he said. He is one of the most knowledgeable and articulate Members of the Congress on national security matters. He knows whereof he speaks and he speaks the truth.

JUSTICE AGAINST SPONSORS OF TERRORISM ACT

Madam President, I have come to the floor a few times this last week to talk about another piece of legislation called the Justice Against Sponsors of Terrorism Act, known as JASTA. This might as well be known as the justice for the 9/11 families bill.

I support the position articulated by the Senator from South Carolina and will vote against the resolution of disapproval to block the Saudi arms sale. I believe that is the same position articulated by the distinguished chairman of the Committee on Armed Services, Senator MCCAIN, and the majority leader, Senator MCCONNELL, and I find myself in agreement with each of them. Some might say: Well, how can you agree to maintain the relationship with Saudi Arabia when it comes to providing them with the necessary arms they need in order to fight this proxy war by Iran against the Gulf State allies and at the same time support this Justice Against Sponsors of Terrorism Act, which some say may be focused on the Saudis. I would like to explain that.

First of all, let me just say that when I think about the Senate, I am reminded of the comments made by Robert Byrd, the distinguished Senator from West Virginia who is no longer with us. He wrote books on Senate procedure. He wrote a history of the United States Senate. He was truly a remarkable man. He was also former majority leader of the Senate and a force to be reckoned with. When I came to the Senate, Senator Byrd said, among other things: In the Senate, you

have no permanent allies. In the Senate, he said, you have no permanent enemies.

I believe what he meant by that was that on a case-by-case basis, people who come from different regions of the country, different States with different interests, will work together where their interests are aligned, and when they are not, they are going to differ—respectfully, I would hope—but they are not going to always do the same thing or see the world in exactly the same way. That doesn't mean we are enemies. That doesn't mean we are adversaries. That is just the way it works.

As I think about our relationship with countries such as Saudi Arabia—but it is not just Saudi Arabia, it is all of our international relationships—we are going to agree with them on matters of principle when our interests are aligned. We are. And certainly in the case of this arms sale, our interests are perfectly aligned.

Saudi Arabia finds itself in a very rough neighborhood, subjected to violence and war perpetrated by Iran, frequently through proxy groups such as Hezbollah, the Houthis, and other forces, but it is very much in the U.S. interest that Iran not continue to dominate the whole region in the Middle East. Obviously, they have made great strides in dominating and influencing Iraq.

Unfortunately, as a result of the misguided nuclear deal negotiated by the White House, Iran is now on a pathway toward a nuclear weapon. One can imagine what our other allies, such as Saudi Arabia and the other Gulf States, are thinking. If our No. 1 adversary in the region is going to get a nuclear weapon, we may need to defend ourselves. By what? Well, by getting nuclear weapons. That makes the world a much more dangerous place.

My point is, when it comes to relationships between Senators from different States, representing different regions and different interests, even though we sometimes agree with each other, sometimes disagree with each other, that is just the way the Senate works, and that is the way I believe the world works. When our interests are aligned with countries such as Saudi Arabia, we will stand with them, and we hope they will stand with us. When they diverge, we are going to take a little different approach.

I believe it is absolutely imperative we override the forthcoming veto of the Justice Against Sponsors of Terrorism Act so the families who suffered so much and lost so much on 9/11 can go to court and make the case, if they can, to hold whoever was responsible accountable. That is just as basic as anything in our system of justice. That is not for us to decide. We are not a court of law. The rules of procedure and the rules of evidence don't apply here. Sometimes I wish they did. In court, you can't just introduce hearsay or conspiracy theories and not back

them up. They have to be based upon reliable testimony as determined by a judge.

That is what the 9/11 families are going to get, is the opportunity to make their case, if they can. I don't know if they are going to be successful, but I do believe one of the most fundamental things about our system of government is the opportunity to try. If you think you have a case to make, present it to the judge and try to make your case. You may win. You may lose.

I spent 13 years of my adult life as a trial judge and on an appellate court, the Texas Supreme Court. Maybe I just became too familiar with how courts operate. Maybe I have more confidence in the ability of the courts to sift through these matters and get to the bottom of them than some of my other colleagues do, but I have confidence, by and large, in the Federal judiciary, and I believe under the oversight of a good Federal judge, they are going to enter the appropriate sort of protective orders necessary to protect people sued against overreaching and fishing expeditions when it comes to discovery, for example. The judge is going to make sure everybody plays by the rules and does not take unfair advantage.

So enough about that. But I believe, unlike a few of my colleagues whose comments I have read about, the Justice Against Sponsors of Terrorism Act does not target a specific country. As I have mentioned time and time again, we don't even mention a specific country in the legislation. All it does is extend a law dating back to 1978—the Foreign Sovereign Immunities Act—and it says that in a narrow set of facts, you may be able to sue a foreign government. In this case, if you sponsor or facilitate a terrorist attack on American soil, you will have been deemed by law to have waived your sovereign immunity and you will be held accountable in court.

Again, I have read the 28 pages that remain classified from the 9/11 report. I have read other responses from our law enforcement and intelligence authorities. I can't talk about that here. I will not talk about that here.

I believe the families do deserve an opportunity to make their case, and I trust that we will override the President's veto once it arrives here after Friday. But it is absolutely imperative that we keep our promises to our allies like Saudi Arabia, particularly where it serves our own national security interests. They live in the region. They are working as a counterbalance and a check on Iranian hegemony. As the Senator from South Carolina noted, Iran is the biggest troublemaker, not only in the Middle East but maybe on the planet. They have been trying to wipe Israel off the map using proxy forces like Hezbollah and Hamas. Obviously, they have been working their mischief in Iraq. After Saddam Hussein was deposed, President al-Maliki was put in place, but unfortunately because of his favoritism toward the Shia Mus-

lims and his opposition to Sunni Muslims, he essentially joined common cause with Iran. Now we find ourselves in the unenviable position, as U.S. military forces that are training and assisting Iranian security forces—as they march forward to Mosul to take that back from the Islamic State, we are literally going to be fighting side by side with Iranian militias directed by the No. 1 state sponsor of terrorism. It is outrageous that we find ourselves in this situation.

I encourage our colleagues to vote against the resolution of disapproval. This bill would keep the United States from supporting Saudi Arabia in ways that benefit our country strategically. As we have heard, that includes tanks and other equipment to help the Saudis maintain control of their border in a very dangerous and tumultuous part of the world and most importantly to help them protect themselves from an emboldened Iran that is awash in cash as a result of the President's misguided, bad nuclear deal in lifting sanctions on the Iranians.

In the long run, I think voting for this bill would actually help Iran and strengthen its hand, and I certainly cannot and will not support that.

Madam President, I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. DONNELLY. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

SUICIDE PREVENTION

Mr. DONNELLY. Madam President, I rise today in recognition of suicide prevention, to continue to shine a light on the impact of suicide and to discuss the importance of efforts to strengthen mental health care. Sadly, too many Hoosiers and Americans are taken from us by suicide, shattering families and communities. Today, I want to talk about suicide prevention as it relates to our servicemembers, our veterans, and their families.

Last year, sadly, for the fourth straight year, more U.S. troops were lost to suicide than in combat. In 2015, 475 servicemembers took their own lives. Prior to that, we lost 443 servicemembers in 2014, and 474 servicemembers in 2013. We are painfully aware of the statistic that an estimated 20 veterans a day take their own lives.

These numbers allude to hundreds upon thousands of individual tragedies that have rocked our families, our communities, and our Nation. These numbers represent sons and daughters, brothers and sisters, and husbands and wives who have dedicated their lives to the service of this Nation and have succumbed to invisible wounds. These numbers illustrate the simple, terrible fact that we are losing too many of our servicemembers and veterans to suicide. These numbers demand that we

keep efforts to improve military and veterans mental health services and suicide prevention efforts at the top of our to-do list in the Senate.

Despite gridlock in Congress, this is an issue where we have solid bipartisan consensus. I have seen it firsthand, working year after year with my colleagues, Republicans and Democrats, to work to improve military mental health care.

In 2014, my bipartisan Jacob Sexton Military Suicide Prevention Act was signed into law. The Sexton act, named for a young Hoosier whom we lost far too soon, established for the first time a requirement that every servicemember—Active, Guard, and Reserve—receive an annual mental health assessment.

Building on the success of the Sexton act, last year we had provisions of my bipartisan Servicemember and Veterans Mental Health Care Package signed into law, which helped expand access to quality mental health care for servicemembers and delivered mental health care in a way that meets the unique needs of servicemembers and veterans, whether through the Department of Defense or civilian providers right in our home communities.

While passing these laws is a step in the right direction, it will take a consistent, concerted effort to bring the number of servicemember suicides down to zero. We need to ensure that the laws we have passed, including the Sexton act and the care package, are implemented correctly so the services reach the troops and the veterans who need them the most. We need to keep working on smart legislation that streamlines access and strengthens the quality of mental health care.

This has been a top priority for me since I first introduced the Sexton act in 2013—my first bill as a U.S. Senator. It remains a top priority for me today.

This year, the final provision of my bipartisan care package passed the Senate as part of the national defense bill. It expands the ability of physician assistants to provide mental health care evaluations and services for servicemembers and their families. The bill establishes a pilot program to expand the use of physician assistants specializing in psychiatric care to help address the mental health care provider shortage.

This legislation can help make a difference for our servicemembers in Indiana and across the entire country. I urge Congress to come together on a final defense bill that can be sent to the President and signed into law.

There is no single solution that ends suicide. We may never fully understand the internal battles that lead to an individual taking his or her own life. However, this much is clear: We must do more to help prevent military and veteran suicides. Throughout September, we will recognize Suicide Prevention Month, but this issue demands our attention and our efforts every single day of the year.

To our servicemembers and veterans struggling with mental health challenges and to your loved ones, we are here for you, and we will not stop working until you receive the care you deserve and the support you need. We will be there with you every step of the way.

Mr. President, I yield back.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. TILLIS). The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Ms. HEITKAMP. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

EXPORT-IMPORT BANK

Ms. HEITKAMP. Mr. President, you wouldn't think that I would have to keep coming here to talk about how it is our responsibility to do everything in our power to grow American manufacturing jobs, keep manufacturing jobs, and make sure American manufacturers are competitive in the global economy.

When young people come to my office to talk about the future, the one thing I tell them—and it is critical that you never forget this—is that 95 percent of all potential consumers in the world today do not live in this country. If you want to be successful in the future, you are going to have to be competitive and you are going to have to be innovative and do everything you can to grab that market share. That is how our economy is going to grow. It is what brings new wealth to our country, and that gives us the opportunity to advance an economic and political agenda that will move our country and the values we have in this democracy forward.

What do we do? We stall out by saying that even though 90 or 80 other countries have export credit agencies that can assist in financing those manufacturing jobs and those purchases, we, the United States of America, are going to tie the hands of a 70-year-old institution that has functioned incredibly well to bring jobs and wealth to our country. We are going to do it not because the will of this body and this Congress hasn't been expressed—in fact, it is the opposite.

When we reauthorized the Export-Import Bank, we were able to secure almost 70 percent of the Senate and over 70 percent of the House. It sounds like a mandate to me. It sounds like an understanding that most of the people in this institution understand the importance of a credit export agency. Guess what. We have now told our export agency: We are not going to give you the structure or the power to function. If you want to do a deal that is more than \$10 million, we won't be there. We will not be there to provide assistance or guarantees, and we will not be able to help American businesses be competitive internationally.

A lot of people will say: Well, those are just the big guys. Those are the

Boeings, GEs, and Caterpillars of the world.

That totally ignores how American manufacturing is done. American manufacturing is done in small shops all across this country, small businesses that have been a part of that supply chain for decades and have relied on the corporate innovation and selling of large aircraft, large construction equipment, and large gas turbines and generators.

Do you know what is going to happen when those manufacturers or assemblers do not have export financing? Guess what they do. They say: I have to move someplace else where I can get it. If I am going to sell my products in the global market, I have to be able to qualify for export financing, and that means I have to move those manufacturing jobs—manufacturing gas turbines or manufacturing small parts—to France, where there is an environment and government that understands the importance of providing this important trade resource.

As we sit here today collectively worried about the middle class and America's competitiveness in manufacturing and trying to grow our global presence and our global exports, we take one critical piece of trade infrastructure and say: Can't use it. It is not because people here don't think so or because the American people don't think that is a good idea.

When you talk about this with the American people, they say: That is crazy. Something that returns dollars to the Treasury and provides this resource to grow American jobs and we are not going to do it?

And I say: We are not going to do it because the conservative think tanks in Washington, DC, whose influence is outsized from their ideas and political support, decided it is not a good idea—whether it is Club for Growth, the Heritage Foundation, CATO, or whichever one comes forward and says it is not a good idea.

We are talking about American jobs and American manufacturing, and we can do something about it with a simple act, which in this CR we have to do because we can't move on the nominee who would give us a quorum on the Ex-Im Bank, and that is what is holding us up. The Ex-Im Bank operates like a lot of banks. It has a board of directors. When that board of directors doesn't have a quorum, they can't make decisions on credits over \$10 million. We have \$20 billion worth of business we could be doing internationally that is held up by the lack of a quorum.

I get it. We are about regular order, right? I don't know what regular order says about not sending a nominee out of a committee so we can vote him up or down. This is the argument I get: We have never had a debate. Really? I can't tell you how many times I have stood in this spot debating the Ex-Im Bank and the values and importance of the Export-Import Bank, but they say we haven't had a debate.

I said: If you want to have a debate, move the nominee to the floor and let's have a debate. You don't want to have a debate because you could lose.

They don't want to have a debate because they will, in fact, lose in this body if that nominee comes up.

I recognize there is support for regular order, if we can call it that. To me, regular order means getting your job done. It doesn't mean stalling out and stopping American innovation and American exports.

Let's say we go to regular order. Now we are working on trying to change the quorum rule so that people can actually make a decision and move these credits forward and get Americans back to work and get us back to exporting.

Where are we right now? Well, we read in the press that once again the outsized—for their political support—interest groups in this town are saying: Don't do it.

American manufacturing is hurt, and American manufacturing is calling and saying: We must do it, and we can't wait until the end of the year. We can't wait to do this credit.

The last time I came here, I brought what I call a payload, a front-end loader. I brought a loader here, and I talked about the manufacturing of that piece of equipment in my State. I talked about a huge credit and a huge deal we could do that involved international credit with a dealership, which would include manufacturers in Iowa, Kansas, and North Dakota—all American jobs. It obviously didn't influence anyone or we would have gotten it done.

So now I am asking that everybody who says they are for American workers, American progress, and American exports to call leadership. This is something we have to do. It is bipartisan and it is nonpartisan. I know the Democrats have put it on their list of asks, but it shouldn't be a Democratic-Republican issue. I have good allies on the other side of the aisle who want to move this forward as well. When we can't move a piece of legislation and an idea that has supermajority support, that is when the American public says: Guess what. This is a broken institution. This is an institution that doesn't function for the American people.

When American jobs and when American workers get pink slips because we aren't doing our job here, that is a sad day for the Congress, and it is a sad day for what we do here.

Standing on principle is one thing. You fought the fight and the Bank was reauthorized. Let's get the Bank fully functioning. Let's get a resolution and a provision in the continuing resolution that actually provides for reviving and moving the Ex-Im Bank forward.

As I have said before in this very spot, I don't go to bed worried about the CEOs of major companies. They have options. They can move those jobs overseas. They will function just fine. They are a part of multinational businesses. I go to bed worried about that

worker who has to come home with a pink slip because there is no longer the opportunity to sell what is being manufactured. Don't think that is not happening right now in the United States of America because it is. Those pink slips are on us. Those pink slips are happening because we have an institution that does not function in a majority fashion and for the people of this country and certainly for the middle class.

Everybody who says they are for the middle class, why don't we just quit engaging in lipservice and start taking action that tells American manufacturers, American workers, and American business that we are going to stand with them as they innovate, export, and grow the economy of this country?

When everybody says our economic growth is sluggish, I look at them and say: Do you know how we can amp it up? By exporting. Do you know why we are not exporting \$20 billion worth of goods in this country? Because we do not have a fully functioning Ex-Im Bank.

There is no way anyone could look at this logically and say this is good public policy.

I couldn't be more distraught or more sympathetic about what is happening to American workers. It is time we all work together.

I know the Presiding Officer is very interested in moving the Bank forward as well, and we all need to make sure we get this problem taken care of before we leave in October.

With that, I yield my time.

I yield the floor and suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. CORKER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. CORKER. Mr. President, I rise to speak about the vote that is going to take place at 2:15 p.m., and I urge my colleagues to vote to table this motion. The motion itself would keep us from being able to follow through on a sale of arms to Saudi Arabia.

It is my belief that the appropriate policy here is to table this motion, and let me take a few moments to share why I feel that way.

First of all, this is not a subsidized sale; this is a sale where a country is trying to buy U.S. weaponry with its own money. This is not the United States giving foreign aid to another country. This is a situation where an ally that is certainly an imperfect ally—they are very aware they have public relations issues within our own country for lots of reasons, but they are an ally nonetheless—has looked around and decided and feels it is the best thing for them to do relative to the purchase of the tanks and other

weaponry listed here. By the way, they already own tanks like this already, and they can go someplace else to purchase them.

Let me start out by saying that we had a huge debate in the Senate about the Iran nuclear deal. We ended up in different places. Fifty-eight people decided they didn't like it, but I think everyone probably has concerns about Iran and what they are doing in the Middle East.

During that timeframe, the administration met at Camp David with Saudi Arabia and some of our other Arab friends in the region and mentioned that in order to counter the nefarious activities Iran is involved in—and I think everyone in this body would agree they are involved in nefarious activities; they are a country we stated is a state sponsor of terrorism—in order to counter that, we would expedite sales to friends like Saudi Arabia and the UAE and other countries in the region, and this is a part of that. In essence, for us to back away from this would be saying we do not want to counter the nefarious activities of terrorism Iran is conducting in the region.

I understand my friend from Kentucky has heartfelt concerns about some of the aid we have provided other countries, and we have had very responsible discussions. Again, this is not aid. This is an ally we are utilizing in our alliance as a balance of power against what Iran is doing in the region. In essence, by not following through on sales to friends like Saudi Arabia and other countries, what we are really saying is, we want to undermine the balance of power that is created there in the region.

Let me say something else. I have noticed in this body that people are far less willing to want to commit U.S. troops in foreign places. There is a range of feelings about that, but I would say, generally speaking, I don't think there is any question that Americans are far less willing to commit massive ground troops to efforts in the Middle East. If we know that to be the mood of the public today, the last thing we would want to do is to not provide the armaments necessary for countries that might be willing to counter terrorism in the region.

Again, to me, this is one of those cases where I think the sponsors of the legislation and those who are advocating for it are well-meaning people, but it is a case where I think we are cutting our nose off to spite our face. I don't understand any policy objective we can be achieving by saying we have a country that wants to buy our equipment with their money—no foreign aid involved whatsoever—and we are unwilling to sell it to them.

Let me make one last point. We have an infrastructure in our country that is utilized to protect us in tough times. These are lines of building equipment that we utilize if we ever have to gear up, and I hope that is not the case again in the near future. If we ever

have to gear up again for operations in other countries, we rely upon these alliances. So what other countries do in purchasing equipment from us is they keep those lines and keep those employees and keep that technology building in such a way that it is useful for us in the future.

Again, I cannot identify a single policy objective we can achieve by blocking a sale to someone who has been an ally. Although not perfect, they are an ally. They are helping us with the balance of power. They are helping us in the fight against some of the efforts that are underway with Iran now in Yemen—we are not involved in that directly; they are helping us with that—and they are a country that again is willing to buy U.S.-made equipment that helps us keep in place the infrastructure that is necessary for us over time to protect our country.

I am glad we are having this debate. I hope we table this motion overwhelmingly to send a message that again we see no good policy objective in carrying out the blocking of this sale.

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, I want to address the issues at the heart of S. J. Res. 39, the resolution introduced by Senators PAUL, MURPHY, LEE, and FRANKEN regarding the sale of \$1.15 billion in military equipment to the Government of Saudi Arabia.

Despite obvious differences in our systems of government and concerning the rights of women and other issues, the United States and Saudi Arabia have a longstanding partnership that has benefitted both countries. For roughly six decades, security cooperation has been an important part of the relationship, fueled by military sales to Saudi Arabia under both Republican and Democratic administrations. For its part, the Government of Saudi Arabia has pledged to work with the United States in countering terrorism in the region.

But what has been unfolding in Yemen since the spring of 2015 should concern all Senators. There have been frequent, credible reports of Saudi Arabian armed forces indiscriminately attacking civilian-populated areas, targeting civilians, and otherwise misusing U.S.-origin weapons; of humanitarian access being impeded; and of a lack of serious investigations of, and accountability for, those who have alleged to have caused civilian casualties.

I am not opposed to training and equipping our allies or selling them the weapons they require to combat terrorism. But the conditions under which we provide such support must include a commitment to avoid civilian casualties and to ensure that if egregious harm is done to the civilian population there are thorough investigations, punishment if warranted, and assistance is provided to the victims. We should also be confident that the strategy and tactics of our allies are achieving goals that we share.

Since the earliest reports of harm inflicted by Saudi forces on the civilian

population in Yemen, I have repeatedly raised this issue with the Department of State. Although the Department and Saudi officials have offered assurances that effective steps are being taken to avoid civilian casualties and to investigate when they occur, the attacks and casualties have continued. Efforts by the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights to conduct an independent investigation into war crimes in Yemen have to date been rebuffed by the Saudi Government. There is scant evidence that the assurances reflect a meaningful change in strategy or tactics or that the Saudi military operations in Yemen are achieving their goals.

That is why I cannot support the provision of military equipment, particularly on this scale, to any country as long as legitimate concerns regarding the manner in which such equipment is being used remain unaddressed. It is inconsistent with the laws of war, and it implicates, at least indirectly, the United States. I need to be convinced that the Saudi Government is taking effective steps to reduce civilian casualties, to address the harm caused by its operations, and to support the unimpeded flow of humanitarian aid to those in need.

Therefore, I will support the resolution and oppose the motion to table.

Mr. CORNER. Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. PAUL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. PAUL. Mr. President, today the Senate will discuss questions of war and peace. Today the Senate will do its constitutional duty for a change. Let's be very clear, though. The Senate does this under duress.

The Senate has abdicated its role in foreign policy for too long. We have been at war nearly continuously for 15 years and the initiation, conclusion, and resumption of war has not had debate in this body. The last time we voted on whether we should be at war was the Iraq war, which was a very emotional vote. It is a war that has long been over.

There is now a new war in Iraq and Syria, but there has been no congressional authorization. Therefore, it is illegal and unconstitutional.

Today's debate will attempt to debate whether or not we should initiate war in Yemen. It is an indirect vote because they won't allow a direct vote. In fact, they would not have allowed this debate had I and several others not forced it. But this is a bipartisan coalition that has brought this issue to the floor and said: We should debate issues of war.

I know young men who have lost limbs in the war. I know young men

and their families who have sacrificed their lives. They deserve to have the country debate when and where we should be at war. It should never be something that we slide into.

Now, some will say: No, we are debating over whether to sell arms to Saudi Arabia. Yes, but I would also argue that we are at war in Yemen. Whether or not we sell arms to Saudi Arabia for the war in Yemen is something that should be debated because it is not just about selling arms. It is about whether we will be complicit in a war in Yemen.

If there is no debate in Congress, if there is no debate in the public, are we ready to spend lives, money, and treasure on another war in Yemen? People will say: Oh, no big deal, we are not really at war in Yemen. Well, yes, we are. We are refueling Saudi bombers that are dropping bombs in Yemen. There is said to be over 3,000 innocent people who have died in Yemen from Saudi bombs. What do you think happens to those families when 100 people die in a wedding in Yemen? What do you think happens to those families? Do you think they have a warm, fuzzy feeling for Saudi Arabia and the United States, which is helping to pick the targets and fuel the planes? Don't you think we as a country ought to have a debate before we go to war? Don't you think we ought to read the Constitution?

Our Founding Fathers had a significant, detailed, and explicit debate over war. They explicitly took the power to declare war, and they gave it to the legislature. Madison wrote that the executive is the branch most prone to war. Therefore, with studied care, the Constitution took the power to declare war and vested it in the legislature. This is repeated throughout the Federalist papers. It is repeated by all of our Founding Fathers that the power to initiate war was too important to place in the hands of one individual.

But over the last decade and a half, we have been at war in Libya without the permission of the American people or Congress. We have been at war in Syria and Iraq without the permission of the American people. Now we are at war in Yemen without the approval of Congress or the American people.

So this is a twofold debate today. It is a debate over whether the United States should be at war without a vote of Congress. I think our Founding Fathers were clear on this. It is absolutely certain that it was supposed to be a prerogative of Congress, but there are also practical concerns.

Some have come to the floor and said: Well, Saudi Arabia is an imperfect ally. Well, I would go a little bit further. Saudi Arabia has often done things that have not been good for America, have not been in our national interest, and have not been consistent with our understanding of human rights.

Let's give a few examples. The girl of Qatif was raped by seven men. Saudi Arabia put her in prison for the crime

of being alone with a man. You see, it is the woman's fault because women don't get to testify. The testimony comes from her attackers, and the woman of Qatif was given 7 years in prison and 200 lashes.

There is a poet who was writing in Indonesia who is Saudi Arabian and who was picked up by Interpol and taken home to be given the death penalty for possible criticism of the state religion.

There was a young 17-year-old man who is a Shia, a minority, who was a protester at a rally. I think he is 21 now. He has been in prison for 4 years. His uncle was beheaded by the government 1 month or 2 ago and was, by all appearances, a religious leader, not a collaborator, not an espionage perpetrator. The man is now 21, has been in prison for 4 years, and faces beheading in Saudi Arabia.

You might say: Well, human rights just aren't important. We need to do what is right for us in the region. We have given Saudi Arabia \$100 billion worth of weapons—\$100 billion. OK, we didn't give it to them; we sold it to them. But you know what. I think the taxpayer owns our weaponry. We have an ownership interest in our weaponry. This is not the free market. The weaponry was developed with taxpayer money and with explicit reservations that we in Congress can control who it is sold to. So we do need to ask, and it is an important debate, and we should be having it here in this body instead of leaving it up to the President. Let's have the debate.

Is Saudi Arabia a good ally?

Well, we have had this war in Syria for some time now. It is a messy war, a sectarian war. Most of the rebel groups are Sunni Muslims and the government is more allied with the Shiites. In this war, there have been hundreds and hundreds of tons of weapons—some by us, but maybe 10-fold more by Saudi Arabia and Qatar. There has been public report after public report after public report saying that these weapons that are being poured into the country by Saudi Arabia have been given indiscriminately. They have been weapons about which some would say: Oh, they are being given to the pro-Americans. One group said that when they were done with Assad, they would go after Israel. It doesn't sound like people who are necessarily our friends.

According to public reports, many of these weapons that Saudi Arabia has bought from us and channeled into Syria have gone to al-Nusra, an off-branch of Al Qaeda. They used the justification to go to war in Syria—the 9/11 justification that said we would go after those who attacked us. I thought that was Al Qaeda. Are we now giving arms to Saudi Arabia, which is giving arms to Al Qaeda and al-Nusra? There have been some reports that the arms have gone directly to ISIS.

I think it has been indiscriminate, inexcusable, and not in our national interest.

How do we know what is in our national interest? We have to have a debate. Instead, Congress wants to be a lap dog for an imperial Presidency—Republican or Democrat, rubberstamped. Here you go—not even a rubberstamp. There is no vote, no discussion, nothing. We are forcing this debate against the wishes of both parties, because both parties are complicit in this. This is not a Republican versus Democrat issue. This is a bipartisan foreign policy consensus that says that we should always give weapons without conditions, indiscriminately. It is \$100 billion of weapons to Saudi Arabia—more than any other President. President Obama has given more.

You say: Why does he do this? Well, because we released about \$100 billion worth of Iranian assets, and the Saudis bug him and say: Well, Iran is getting all this money. We need weapons, too. So it fuels an arms race over there.

But here is the great irony of this. It is something that is so ironic that this body cannot overcome it. Unanimously, this body voted to let 9/11 victims sue Saudi Arabia. Now, why would we let them do that unless the people who voted unanimously actually believe that there is a possibility Saudi Arabia had something to do with 9/11? So the body that voted unanimously that there is a possibility that Saudi Arabia had something to do with 9/11 is now going to vote overwhelmingly to send weapons to the country they think might have had something to do with 9/11?

Is Saudi Arabia an ally or an enemy? I sometimes call them “frenemy.” I am not arguing that they never do anything that is good for us. They do on occasion. They also do many things that aren’t good for us. As we look through the list of things and we look to the arms that have been channeled into this region, we wonder: Will we be better off? Will our national security be better off or worse off?

For example, as to the weapons that Saudi Arabia poured into Syria, they pushed back Assad, and there occurred a vacuum in the Syrian civil war. Guess who came to occupy that vacuum? Guess who grew stronger and stronger in the absence of Assad and in the chaos of the civil war? ISIS.

In Yemen, you have several factions fighting. It is maybe not quite as complicated as Syria, but you have Salafis, people who believe in the primitive, intolerant form of Islam that Saudi Arabia practices. These people are allied with Saudi Arabia. They are fighting against rebels they call the Houthi rebels. The Houthi rebels are allied with Iran and in all likelihood are supplied by Iran. They fight each other. It is somewhat of a proxy war between Saudi Arabia and Iran.

You say: Don’t we hate Iran so much that we have to be involved everywhere to stop Iran? I don’t know. Saudi Arabia funds hatred around the world. Does Iran fund madrassas in our country? That is a really good question. I don’t think I heard anybody ask it.

I am not apologizing for Iran, by any means, but Iran, to my knowledge, does not fund madrassas in our country. Saudi Arabia does. Saudi Arabia funds madrassas around the world that teach hatred of America, hatred of the West, and hatred of Christianity. By the way, if you are a Christian, don’t bother trying to go to Saudi Arabia. You are not allowed in Mecca, you are not allowed in Medina, and God forbid you bring a Bible into their country. This is whom we want to send more weapons to?

What of the Yemen war? What happens as the weapons pour into Yemen? Is it possible that ISIS and Al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula sit by laughing and rubbing their hands, watching the war between the Houthis and the Salafis, and then step into the breach? It is what happened in Syria.

Are we not to learn the lessons of the Middle East? Are we to completely stick our heads in the sand and say: We must always give weapons, and if we don’t give weapons, that is isolationism. That is, literally, what people are saying. It is isolationism not to send \$1 billion worth of weapons. To send \$1 billion less would somehow be isolationism. Well, perhaps it would send a message.

There have been people who have described Saudi Arabia as both arsonists and firefighters—throwing fuel and adding fuel to the flames and at times being our friend and being helpful, maybe giving us some information or some intelligence.

As to the Syrian civil war, nothing good has come from that civil war. Arms have been plowed into that country from both sides, and there is nothing good. But one concrete thing has come from the Syrian civil war—millions of refugees, millions of displaced people. They have flooded Europe, and they are wanting to come to America also.

What do you think will happen in Yemen if we put more weapons in there? What do you think happens in Yemen if we put more arms into Yemen? More or less refugees? There will be millions of refugees coming. They will be flooding out of Yemen, if they can get out of there, as the war accelerates.

Does Saudi Arabia help with the refugees? Does Qatar help? Do any of the Gulf States take any refugees? Zero. Saudi Arabia has taken zero refugees. So while they fan the flames, while they send arms into Syria and arms into Yemen and bombs into Yemen, they take zero refugees from Yemen or from Syria. Somehow it always seems to be America’s responsibility to pay for everything and to absorb the brunt of the civil wars throughout the Middle East.

I think there is another answer. I am not saying that we can’t be allied with Saudi Arabia, but I am saying that they need a significant message sent to them. I am saying they need to change their behavior, and I am saying there

needs to be evidence that Saudi Arabia has changed their behavior. This evidence needs to be that they quit funding madrassas that preach hate; that they come into the modern world and quit beheading people when they don’t like what they say; that they quit beating and imprisoning the victims of rape.

I think we should think long and hard about war. I think war should always be the last resort, not the first resort. I don’t think it should be easy to go to war. I think our Founding Fathers understood that. They did not want to give one man or one woman the power to declare war, the power to initiate war. That power was specifically and explicitly given to Congress.

There is something to be said about the corrupting influence of power. Lincoln said: If you want to test a man, give him power. The true test is whether a man can resist the allure of power. I think this President has, on many occasions, failed that allure, whether it is privacy or whether it is issues of war.

President Obama once was a defender of privacy and once was a defender of the Constitution, but for some reason, the power of the office has caused him to forget the constitutional restraints that disallow even him from creating, causing, engaging in war without our permission.

But there is blame to go around. For partisan reasons, we want to blame the other party sometimes, but if you look at the blame and who is to blame, there is a great deal of blame to go around—the President for taking us to war without our permission, but even more so, Congress for its abdication of our role, our responsibility.

The last vote on going to war was for the Iraq war in 2002. We have not voted to go back to war. We have abdicated our responsibility.

There is a young man in the military currently who is actually suing over an order he was given to go to war because he said it is not constitutional for him to go to war without the permission of Congress. The President once understood this.

This is a proxy debate over whether Congress has a role, whether we are relevant in foreign policy, and whether we will stand up and do our duty. We should be debating on this floor with every Member present whether the President will be authorized to fight a war in Syria and Iraq.

We should also have that same debate on Yemen because we are involved in the war in Yemen, and everyone who loses their life there believes that it is not only Saudi Arabia that is bombing them, they believe it is us. We are refueling the bombers in midair, we are helping to choose the targets, and we have people embedded within this war zone. So make no mistake, we are at war in Yemen. We are at war illegally and unconstitutionally and without the permission of Congress.

We should immediately stop everything we are doing and debate a use of

authorization of force for the Middle East. Everybody says they are for it on both sides, yet it never happens because it is messy. It is messy also because I think the American people might wake up to the facts. They might wake up to the fact that ISIS grew in the midst of a Syrian civil war. They might wake up to the fact that our involvement in the Yemen war may well make Al Qaeda stronger, may well make ISIS stronger.

This is a twofold debate. It is a debate over whether you can go to war without the authority of Congress, but it is also a debate over selling arms and whether that will be in our national interest. I think we still do own these arms. Those arms are not privately owned by a company. We paid for the research for them. They are owned by the taxpayer, and by law there are restrictions as to where they can be sold.

I don't believe Saudi Arabia is an ally we can trust. The fact is, they continue to support schools in our country—schools that preach hatred of our country, preach hatred of Israel, and preach hatred of civilization, as far as I am concerned. I just don't see how we send them the correct message by saying: You can have unlimited arms from us.

Some say this is too far. I say this is too little. But I think there will be something that occurs today. It will occur despite what the majority wants. This is a debate, but this is not the end of the debate. If we lose the battle on the vote, we will have begun the debate over whether Congress is relevant. Whether or not we go to war without the permission of Congress, this is the beginning of the debate. Part of the victory is that we are having this debate, but mark my words—we are having this debate only because it has been forced upon Congress. No one on either side of the aisle wants this debate. If they could, this would be shuffled under the rug. It has occurred only because the law mandates that they allow it to occur. But this should be occurring on moments of war, on issues of war, and I regret that we don't do it.

I hope in the future this will be a lesson to the American people and to the Senate that it is our duty, and there is no duty above our duty to decide when and where we go to war.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mrs. FISCHER). The Senator from Tennessee.

Mr. CORKER. Madam President, I have respect for my friend from Kentucky. We have had numbers of conversations about this. I think he is aware that I am holding up, as chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee, subsidies going to Pakistan in their purchase of F-16s. I do so because I don't believe we should be subsidizing a country that has been so duplicitous with us in so many ways.

So there are some issues we agree with, including the fact that I am glad to be having this debate. I do think Congress is playing a role today. Regardless of how you vote, Congress is

exercising itself. I am glad that is occurring. I just think it is cutting our nose off to spite our face to block a sale—a sale. This is not being subsidized.

Saudi Arabia is not a perfect ally, but they have chosen to pursue and purchase U.S. equipment versus Russian equipment or Chinese equipment or some other equipment. This is a sale that benefits us. It benefits our country in a number of ways. If I may, I will lay those out one more time.

No. 1, one of the things that have occurred with the Iran deal is that we have upset, to a degree, perceptually the balance of power in the Middle East. Even the President, who brought forth the Iran deal that I opposed and the majority of people on the floor opposed, realized that was going to be a problem. He convened Saudi Arabia and the UAE and some of our other Arab allies at Camp David and suggested that we would expedite sales to these countries in order to push back against the nefarious activities that we know Iran is conducting. All of us agree with that. They are a state sponsor of terror.

So, in essence, if we block a sale to a country that we have agreed, in order to strengthen our alliance with them and to counter what Iran is doing—all we are doing is cutting our nose off to spite our face.

Mr. MCCAIN. Will the Senator yield for a question?

Mr. CORKER. Yes.

Mr. MCCAIN. Is it correct that in Yemen, the Houthis are a proxy for Iran?

Mr. CORKER. No question.

Mr. MCCAIN. It is true that weapons supplies from Iran have been intercepted?

Mr. CORKER. We have interdicted them several times.

Mr. MCCAIN. Is it true—would you estimate, given your knowledge of the issue, that if Saudi Arabia had not intervened in Yemen, it would now have become a client state and would have been taken over basically by the Iranians?

Mr. CORKER. I don't think that is even debatable.

Mr. MCCAIN. So you agree—

Mr. CORKER. That is correct.

Mr. MCCAIN. Isn't it true that in all conflicts—one of the great tragedies of conflicts is that innocent civilians are slaughtered?

Mr. CORKER. No question. As a matter of fact, we have actually demarched, in some ways, Saudi Arabia because we felt in some ways, using what we might call “dumb bombs,” that civilians were being killed in inappropriate ways. They have moved to using other weaponry, smart bombs, and other kind of things to move away from that.

So we don't think Saudi Arabia has been perfect in Yemen. No doubt civilians have been killed. But the facts that you are stating about pushing back against an Iranian proxy are true.

Had they not done that, the country would have fallen into their hands, no question.

Mr. MCCAIN. Could I ask again the chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee: Suppose that, unimpeded, the Houthis, the clients of the Iranians, had taken over the country of Yemen. What would that do? Would that, indeed, pose a threat to the Straits of Hormuz, where they are already harassing American naval vessels?

Mr. CORKER. It creates greater instability in a region that already has had tremendous amounts of it. But no question—I mean, it borders the Straits. Again, it puts more of that in Iranian hands, no question.

Mr. MCCAIN. Would it be accurate to state that your committee has held hearings on human rights, your committee has advocated improvements of human rights in Saudi Arabia, and it is the thinking of almost all of us that we want to see more progress in that direction? But at the same time, isn't it true that when we look at what Bashar al-Assad is doing, when we look at the slaughter of 400,000 people in Syria, 6 million refugees, would one assume that maybe this priority of the sponsors of this amendment might be a little bit misplaced?

Mr. CORKER. Look, I was speaking earlier about this issue, which no one knows more about than the Senator from Arizona, but one of the basic national interests that we have in the Middle East is the balance of power.

As you know well, people in our country have been far more reticent to have our own men and women on the ground in the Middle East. I mean, that is just a fact. We know that. If that is the case, then if you have a country like Saudi Arabia that is willing to push back against these efforts which, again, further Iran, it seems to me that we would want to allow them to buy equipment to be able to do that. So it helps us with the balance of power. It helps us with an ally. It helps us push back against Iran, and the thing I know you care so much about is our own readiness in the United States. It also keeps the lines of building equipment open. That could be very useful to us down the road. So I don't understand what policy objective could possibly be achieved by blocking this sale.

Mr. MCCAIN. May I ask one more question concerning the so-called 28 pages that recently have been declassified? Isn't it true that information implicates individual Saudis as having been responsible for 9/11? Isn't it true that no one disagrees with that?

Mr. CORKER. That is correct.

Mr. MCCAIN. But isn't it also true that the Government of Saudi Arabia has not been implicated by these so-called 28 pages that were going to reveal the vast conspiracy that the Government of Saudi Arabia allegedly for years had—the adversaries, shall I say, had alleged that somehow the Saudi

Government was involved in? Isn't it true that the 28 pages show they were not?

Mr. CORKER. That is right. One thing that is sad about this in some ways is that everything you have said is true. But in addition to that, there are some intelligence community affidavits that go on top of these and explain even more fully that that is the case. Yet those documents, because they are classified, likely will not be made available to the U.S. public. But I have seen them, you have seen them, and others here have seen them. There is a huge misunderstanding, if you will, about what these 28 pages contain. Then, what has come after that by other intelligence agencies within our own country further state with even greater strength some of the things that you just said. There is just no evidence.

Mr. MCCAIN. So, if this proposal or this piece of legislation were passed, I would ask my friend: What message is sent? What message would be sent, supposing that we voted in favor of this misguided resolution that we are now debating?

Mr. CORKER. I think it sends—

Mr. MCCAIN. Not only to Saudi Arabia—

Mr. CORKER. Yes.

No, I think it sends a signal.

Look, I don't think anybody can debate—we have had these discussions in our Foreign Relations Committee. I know you have had them in Armed Services, where you are the distinguished chairman.

I think everyone on both sides of the aisle understands what a blow to our credibility—this is not a pejorative statement—has occurred to us since August–September of 2013. People understand in the region and in the world our credibility has diminished over the redline. This is just sending a signal to people even more fully that we cannot be counted upon; that the objectives we lay out to achieve a balance of power, to help our friends, to counter the nefarious activities that everyone acknowledges Iran is conducting cannot be conducted. It is another stake in the heart about what we value most about our Nation; that is, our credibility to others.

I hope this is defeated.

I appreciate my friend from Kentucky and his feelings about this particular issue. I don't look at this as a proxy for some other issue relative to the declaration of war. That, to me, is a stretch. This is about a direct relationship and other relationships that you are referring to and—basically—demonstrating that we as a nation cannot be counted upon.

Mr. MCCAIN. I thank the Senator, the chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee, for his stewardship of the Foreign Relations Committee, for his in-depth knowledge and advocacy for a strong America and strong alliances.

I think the voice you have added to this debate should have an effect, I

hope, on both sides of the aisle. I thank the Senator.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Kentucky.

Mr. PAUL. Madam President, there is probably no greater issue before Congress at any time in our lives or any time in our service than whether we should go to war. I think it is a mistake to slide into war. I think it is a mistake to allow the power to declare war to default to one person. Our Founding Fathers were very clear throughout the Federalist Papers, explicitly in the Constitution, that the power to declare war shouldn't go to one person; that the power to declare war should be determined by a vote of Congress. We have abdicated that role, and the vote today is a vote over whether we should try to reclaim that power.

Some will say: Well, it is just arms, and if we don't sell them, somebody else will.

Well, you know, I don't think of national security as a jobs program. I don't think of whether we create jobs here at home. I think about the young man who lives down the road from me who lost both legs and an arm, OK? I think about the human toll of war. I think about whether there is a national security interest, but I think nothing at all about whether any jobs are created.

If we make weapons and we have a weapons industry, that is good for our country when we make them for ourselves, but when we are selling weapons around the world, by golly, we shouldn't sell weapons to people who are not putting them to good purpose. What we have found is that Saudi Arabia is an irresponsible ally.

One of the great ironies that nobody here can quite explain is that this body has voted unanimously to let the people of 9/11 sue Saudi Arabia. So we are going to let the person who we think might have had something to do with Saudi Arabia have more weapons? What kind of signal is that to Saudi Arabia?

Would Saudi Arabia be bereft of weapons if we held \$1 billion out? No. We have already sold them \$99 billion worth. They have enough to blow up the Middle East 10 times over. I think it might send them a message.

Do you know what. Stop the sale, send them a message. Do you know what the message might be? Quit funding madrassas that teach hate in our country. Don't tell us you are going to stop doing it.

Saudi Arabia, tomorrow, stop funding madrassas in America that teach hatred, that teach intolerance. Stop putting Christians to death. Stop putting people who convert to Christianity to death. Stop beheading protesters.

The one young man who is a protestor in Saudi Arabia is scheduled to be beheaded and crucified. Does that sound like somebody who is a great ally with a great human rights record?

The young woman who was raped by seven men—she was put in prison. She

was told it was her fault for being alone with the man. She was publicly whipped.

Poets have been picked up around the world and brought back to Saudi Arabia to be whipped for what they write.

Do you trust Saudi Arabia to do the right things with your weapons? These weapons are owned by the American taxpayer. We built them. We did the research into them. Private companies make money off of them, but it isn't about them making money. It isn't about them getting to sell the weapons instead of Russia selling the weapons. It is about our national security.

Saudi Arabia's indiscriminate placement of weapons into the Syrian civil war has led to the rise of ISIS. ISIS grew stronger as Saudi Arabia was flying weapons to al-Nusra, Al Qaeda, and likely some of them to ISIS.

We now have a war in Yemen. Yes, we are directly involved in the war. Yes, this is a vote not just about weapons, this is a vote about whether we should be at war in Yemen. We are refueling the Saudi bombers in midair. Our military planes are, in a sophisticated fashion, refueling their planes. Do you think the Yemenis think: Oh, no big deal. You know, 3,000 citizens have died. When you go to a wedding in Yemen and you get a bomb dropped on you from Saudi Arabia, do you think you have warm, fuzzy feelings for our great ally, Saudi Arabia?

Absolutely, we should be telling Saudi Arabia what to do. These are our weapons. Do you know when they are willing to listen? It is when we argue from a position of strength.

Do you know what is the ultimate weakness? Give them what they want. Giving the arms industry what they want is the ultimate weakness. We look weak, and we look bowed before and cowed before the Saudi Arabians.

As they sit back in their long robes sipping tea, refugees bob about the Mediterranean. People are starving and displaced in Yemen. Not one of them will come to Saudi Arabia, not one of them will be allowed in the country.

Yes, this is a debate about war, and this is a debate about whether you want to be at war in Yemen. It is not just a debate about sending and selling another \$1 billion of weapons, it is about should we be at war in Yemen. It is about should we be at war anywhere without the permission of Congress.

This is not a small occurrence. This is not a small happening. This is a big deal. This is the most important vote that any legislator will ever have. Should we be at war or shouldn't we be at war?

Those who want to make this about a jobs program, about we are going to get some sales of tanks—no, it is not a jobs program. It is about young men and women dying in a war. It is about whether it is in our national interests. It is about whether we are going to be safer. Shouldn't we have a debate over whether the war in Yemen is making us safer?

We certainly should have had a debate about the war in Libya. Did that make us safer? Once Qadhafi was gone, chaos ensued. ISIS controls one-third of Libya after the war as a result of the war.

We are now bombing in Libya. We are bombing the replacement to the government we bombed. So we bombed Qadhafi into oblivion. We don't like the people who replaced him either so we are bombing them. Does anybody think that maybe it is a mistake?

This is what this debate is about. What should American foreign policy be? Should Congress lie down and be a lapdog for the President—let him do whatever he wants? That is what a vote on this will mean if you let the President have what he wants, if you let the arms industry have what they want because they can make a buck selling tanks into a war that is a catastrophe.

In the Wall Street Journal, Simon Henderson wrote that the chaos and violence in Yemen is such that it would be an improvement to call it a civil war.

It is hard to know who is friend and foe. Even our former Ambassador to Syria has said, in Syria, it is almost impossible to know friend from foe.

People have repeatedly written that Saudi weapons in Syria have gone to the wrong people. It is not like: Whoops, Saudi Arabia is sometimes wrong, and they are not that bad. They have a horrific human rights record. There are people who believe them to be complicit in 9/11. This body voted unanimously to let the 9/11 victims sue them, and now this body wants to give them weapons? Does no one sense the irony?

As we move forward on this vote, everyone should understand that this is a proxy vote for whether we should be at war in the Middle East because neither side—the leadership on neither side—will allow a vote on whether we should authorize force. Neither side will let the constitutional debate occur on whether we should be at war.

I see my colleague from Connecticut. Would he like to have the last word?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Connecticut.

Mr. MURPHY. I thank the Senator.

Madam President, I do think this is an important moment. As I said in my opening remarks, I don't think a vote in favor of this resolution fundamentally breaks the alliance with Saudi Arabia.

They remain an incredibly important partner. We will still cooperate with them with respect to other counterterrorism measures. We understand the importance of the role they play in the Middle East with respect to providing some sort of detente between Sunni nations and Israel, but friends also have the ability to part ways. Friends have the ability to call each other out when their friend isn't acting in their interests.

As we have talked about over the course of the last few hours, there is no

way to read the war in Yemen as in our national security interests. There is no way to understand how the growth of Al Qaeda and ISIS inside Yemen, as a result of a bombing campaign that is funded by the United States, is in our national interests.

I hope we have a good vote because I think it will send a strong message to the Saudis that their behavior has to change, but I hope we are able to find other ways where Republicans and Democrats can come together to talk about these issues because Senator PAUL is right. We are not doing our constitutional duty. We are not performing our constitutional responsibility when we acknowledge multiple conflicts in the Middle East that are unauthorized today—when we don't come to the floor of the Senate and do what we used to do, which is debate matters of war and peace.

Maybe war looks different today than it did 20 years ago or 50 years ago or 100 years ago, when conventional armies marched against each other, but this smells, this looks, and this sounds like war. We are providing the ammunition. We are providing the targeting assistance. The planes couldn't fly without U.S. refueling capacity.

We may not be—American pilots may not actually be pulling the trigger to drop the bombs, but we are pretty much doing everything else that is necessary for this war to continue. It sounds like we should have a say, as a coequal branch, as the article I institution, as to whether this is in U.S. national security interests.

At the very least, by saying it is time to put a pause on these arms sales—which, by the way, are happening at a pace that is unprecedented. There are unprecedented levels of arms sales, not just to Saudi Arabia but to the region at large. By saying it is time to put a pause on arms sales, we send a strong message to our ally, Saudi Arabia, that if the conduct of this war doesn't change inside Yemen, if their continued export of Wahhabism to the world doesn't change, then we all have to rethink this partnership.

Friends occasionally disagree. I think this is a moment of important disagreement. This doesn't fracture the partnership with Saudi Arabia. Ultimately, it may make our partnership stronger.

I thank Senator PAUL for leading us, and I encourage my colleagues to support this resolution.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Tennessee.

Mr. CORKER. Madam President, I think it would be wonderful to debate many of the things, at any time, that any Senator wishes to debate, but to use this as a proxy for something totally unrelated, to me, is a most unusual way of approaching the other issues that have been discussed.

This has nothing to do with a declaration of war. This has nothing to do with any of those things. This is about whether we want to consummate a

sale, a purchase—an arm's length purchase—between two countries that we have said, as a national policy, would help strengthen our own U.S. national interests.

If we will remember, the President actually convened—by the way, in a bipartisan way, we supported this—convened these countries to share with them that we were going to be willing to expedite the sale of arms to counter Iranian influence in the region and to continue to have the balance of power that is on the ground.

Again, I think, today, based on just the conversations I have had, Republicans and Democrats are going to come together overwhelmingly to table this motion that is definitely, from my standpoint, not in U.S. national interests. I do think what they are speaking to is going to occur. My sense is, there is going to be an overwhelming vote to table this because people realize that while the optics of it—you know, Saudi Arabia, people are wondering about them, which is true—at the end of the day, a vote for this resolution, again, cuts our nose off to spite our face.

We are here to do those things that are in our own country's national interest, and I hope today we will bind together and continue to do that by tabling this motion.

With that, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. McCONNELL. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. McCONNELL. Madam President, I move to table the motion to discharge and ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The question is on agreeing to the motion to table.

The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. CORNYN. The following Senator is necessarily absent: the Senator from South Dakota (Mr. THUNE).

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from Virginia (Mr. Kaine) is necessarily absent.

I further announce that, if present and voting, the Senator from Virginia (Mr. Kaine) would vote "yea."

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. TOOMEY). Are there any other Senators in the Chamber desiring to vote?

The result was announced—yeas 71, nays 27, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 145 Leg.]

YEAS—71

Alexander	Boozman	Carper
Ayotte	Brown	Casey
Barrasso	Burr	Cassidy
Bennet	Capito	Coats
Blunt	Cardin	Cochran

Collins	Hoeven	Reed
Coons	Inhofe	Risch
Corker	Isakson	Roberts
Cornyn	Johnson	Rounds
Cotton	King	Rubio
Crapo	Lankford	Sasse
Cruz	Manchin	Schumer
Daines	McCain	Scott
Donnelly	McCaskill	Sessions
Enzi	McConnell	Shaheen
Ernst	Menendez	Shelby
Feinstein	Merkley	Sullivan
Fischer	Mikulski	Tillis
Flake	Moran	Toomey
Gardner	Murkowski	Vitter
Graham	Nelson	Warner
Grassley	Perdue	Whitehouse
Hatch	Peters	Wicker
Heitkamp	Portman	

NAYS—27

Baldwin	Heller	Paul
Blumenthal	Hirono	Reid
Booker	Kirk	Sanders
Boxer	Klobuchar	Schatz
Cantwell	Leahy	Stabenow
Durbin	Lee	Tester
Franken	Markey	Udall
Gillibrand	Murphy	Warren
Heinrich	Murray	Wyden

NOT VOTING—2

Kaine	Thune
-------	-------

The motion was agreed to.

LEGISLATIVE BRANCH APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2017—MOTION TO PROCEED—Continued

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Florida.

Mr. NELSON. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that I be given 1 minute so I can give a short speech.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

NASA LEGISLATION

Mr. NELSON. Mr. President, we just passed a NASA bill in the Commerce Committee, and we are going to Mars. We are going to Mars in the decade of the 2030s with humans, and the bill sets the goal of having a colonization of other worlds. This is a new and exciting time in our Nation's space exploration program and particularly now with the human exploration program. I thought that would be good news for the Senate.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Tennessee.

Mr. ALEXANDER. I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mrs. SHAHEEN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

NOMINATION OF DOUGLAS WILSON

Mrs. SHAHEEN. Mr. President, I am on the floor today to raise my concern about another nominee who has been on hold in this body for months. I am sad to say that this has been an ongoing issue with the Senate. People have been nominated—good people who are very well qualified—and then their nomination doesn't get acted upon.

One of those people is Douglas Wilson, who has been nominated to serve

on the U.S. Advisory Commission on Public Diplomacy. This is probably a Commission that most people don't even know exists, and yet Mr. Wilson has been on hold since June 13, when his nomination was referred to the floor. He actually was nominated by the President in March.

He is eminently qualified. He is a noncontroversial nominee. The Republican Vice Chairman of the Commission, William Hybl, has urged the Senate to confirm Mr. Wilson, and yet his confirmation remains blocked for reasons that seem completely unrelated to the nominee or his qualifications.

I believe it is time for the Senate to confirm Mr. Wilson so that the Commission can be fully constituted to carry out its important mission. Surely, these days when there are so many hotspots around the world, when there is so much going on, it would be helpful to have the Advisory Commission on Public Diplomacy in place and fully staffed up to be able to help advise on so many of the conflicts that we see going on in the world.

Doug Wilson has had a distinguished career of more than three and a half decades in the public and private sector. After graduating from Stanford University and the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy, Doug became a Foreign Service officer serving in posts throughout Europe and later with senior positions with the U.S. Information Agency. During the Clinton administration, he served as Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Public Affairs under Secretary Cohen. Most recently, from 2010 to 2012, he was Assistant Secretary of Defense for Public Affairs, serving as a principal adviser to the Secretary of Defense.

He is a three-time recipient of the Department of Defense Distinguished Public Service Award, the Pentagon's highest civilian honor. Since 2013, he has been a senior fellow and chair of the board of advisers at the Truman National Security Project. In 2009, he was the founding chair of the board of directors at Harvard's Public Diplomacy Collaborative. I think there is no question that Doug Wilson is extremely qualified. He has worked in a bipartisan way over the years.

I have had the great pleasure of knowing Doug for more than 30 years. When I first met him, he was a foreign policy adviser to then-Senator Gary Hart. He worked in that role again when Senator Hart ran for President in 1984.

The fact is that the work of the U.S. Advisory Commission on Public Diplomacy has never been more important and urgent. One of the great foreign policy challenges of our day is countering the poisonous ideology of violent extremist groups. Another is countering Russian propaganda and Russian meddling in Europe and central Asia. The Commission plays an important role in helping our Nation address these challenges, and we need people with the right experience and the right

judgment to serve on that Commission—people like Doug Wilson.

I am disappointed that this nomination of someone so eminently qualified—someone who has support on both sides of the aisle and from the Republican Vice Chairman of that Commission, Mr. Hybl—continues to remain on hold before this body. I don't know why. For some reason someone has objected to this moving forward. We don't know who that is. We don't know what their objections are.

That is one of the challenges we have in this body that needs to change if government is going to operate the way the people of this country expect.

So I am going to keep coming to the floor. I am going to keep trying to move Doug Wilson's nomination, as I have since June. I am hopeful that at some point the majority will hear these concerns and agree that we should approve him and make sure that this Commission is fully functioning.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Georgia.

Mr. ISAKSON. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that I be recognized, and following my remarks, Senator CASEY from Pennsylvania be recognized, followed by Senator SANDERS from Vermont, followed by Senator WARREN from Massachusetts, and followed by Senator ALEXANDER from Tennessee.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST—S. 1878

Mr. ISAKSON. Mr. President, this is somewhat of an unorthodox way to ask for a UC, but we are going to go through a process this afternoon talking about a bill called the Pediatric Rare Disease Priority Review Voucher Act, which expires on September 30 of this year.

All of those names I just mentioned have a stake in this particular debate and I am going to lead it off. Then, I am actually going to refer to my colleague from Pennsylvania, Senator CASEY, my friend and coauthor of this legislation for the purposes of the UC motion, and then we will go from there.

Mr. President, I fell in love with my wife in 1968 and married her 48 years ago. We have had a great marriage. But in 2004, I fell in love with Alexa Rohrbach, the young lady to my left who you can see on the screen here.

Alexa had neuroblastoma, an incurable cancer of the brain. She came to Washington, DC, lobbying us to try to accelerate the research into rare diseases for children and to try to find cures for them. I got interested, and I went to the Children's Hospital of Pittsburgh, PA, where Senator CASEY is so active. I am active in children's health care in Atlanta, and I saw many of the breakthroughs for cancer and other diseases of children. BOB CASEY and I got very interested in seeing what we could do to further the development of new drugs coming into the

marketplace to save lives and make the quality of life better. Such was my desire to be, hopefully, the guy who prompted some researcher somewhere to develop a new program that would research neuroblastoma and would correct it so that Alexa Rohrbach could sit by me today.

Five years after I met her, Alexa Rohrbach died, but my passion for trying to meet the request that Alexa had lobbied for did not go away. It actually burned brighter. So Senator CASEY and I got together and developed the FDA Rare Pediatric Disease Priority Review Voucher Act, and passed it 5 years ago. That bill provided, as an incentive for companies to develop breakthrough drugs, a priority review voucher for future drugs that would incentivize them to work harder to develop new drugs. Such has been the case in a number of things that have happened, and I am very proud that took place.

But that program is expiring September 30. I want to see to it that it is extended. It is an incentive that incentivizes the right thing to happen for the right people for it to happen for, and it doesn't cost the taxpayer any money, but saves lives and it makes their quality of life better.

There will be objections that you will hear from Senator SANDERS and Senator WARREN and maybe others about this—that or the other, in terms of pharmaceutical companies or in terms of trying to do a package of bills together—but there is no reason whatsoever to object to a unanimous consent to adopt the extension for 5 years for this proven program.

Some of those who will object have written letters to the FDA encouraging programs like this to exist—one of them being Senator WARREN from Massachusetts, who on the April 15 of this year signed this letter to the FDA, urging the acceleration of development of a breakthrough drug for Duchenne disease. By the way, on Monday of this week the Sarepta Therapeutics company in Boston, MA, was approved by the FDA for the development of a new drug that is the first drug to treat Duchenne muscular dystrophy, a disease that affects 1 in 3,500 boys who are born, limits the quality of their life, and, in many cases, causes death. That process was developed through the work of a company. We want to make sure that companies are incentivized to make those types of breakthroughs again. There are so many companies where, if given the right incentive and the right opportunity, breakthroughs can be developed. Lives can be saved, and the quality of life can be better.

We will hear all kinds of arguments about pharmaceutical companies, and you will hear arguments about this, that, and the other. The facts of this matter are clear. This bill is an incentive that for 5 years has incentivized the development of new breakthrough drugs to cure diseases and ailments that affect children in America. It is an incentive that is right, it is not an incentive that is wrong, and it works.

Any objection to it for any reason whatsoever—such as that it ought to be included with another package of drugs or that because pharmaceutical companies develop breakthroughs, we shouldn't do it, is a bogus argument.

I will be glad to debate anybody, anyplace, anywhere if you are talking about a philosophical difference, but by golly, I will not debate them about delaying something that can expedite a cure being developed in the United States of America for a disease that kills children.

So when BOB CASEY and I ask for unanimous consent today to approve the bill, it is only approving an extension for 5 years of a bill that is in place and has worked. It doesn't cost the American taxpayer a dime but may save the life of an American taxpayer and their children. That is a good thing for us to be here for. That is the reason I am still here today at age 71. It is to see to it that I make some contribution to the furtherance of health and the quality of life for every child in America.

It is my hope that at some point in time in this debate before we get to the end of the year, those who have adversarial reasons to object to a unanimous consent for an extension of 5 years will come to the reality that we are doing the right thing for the right reasons. It is not partisan. It is not political. It is practical, and it is right.

I publicly want to thank Senator BOB CASEY from Pennsylvania for being my partner throughout this development, and I encourage every Member in the Chamber, when they have the opportunity, to vote for the health of our children, to vote for the extension of their lives, to vote for the development of new cures coming through and the research and development and incentives to cause that to happen.

With that said, I yield to Senator CASEY.

THE PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Pennsylvania.

Mr. CASEY. Mr. President, I want to thank my colleague from Georgia for his good work to advance the process. I offer the following consent request:

I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of Calendar No. 415, S. 1878; that the committee-reported substitute amendment be agreed to; that the bill, as amended, be read a third time and passed; and that the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table with no intervening action or debate.

THE PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Mr. SANDERS. Reserving the right to object, Mr. President.

THE PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Vermont.

Mr. SANDERS. Thank you, Mr. President.

Mr. President, it goes without saying, to pick up on Senator ISAKSON's point, that there is nobody in this body who does not want to see cures as

quickly as possible for the terrible diseases that are taking the lives of children in this country. That is not the debate. Nor I think is it the debate that we need research and development to get us a cure of cancer, to get us a cure of Alzheimer's disease, to get us a cure of diabetes, and so many other diseases that are shortening the lives of people in our country and around the world. We must work together to make that happen.

In my view, if we understand that it is imperative that we try to come up with cures to these terrible diseases, there is no debate, I would hope, that the U.S. Government and institutions like the National Institutes of Health and the Food and Drug Administration must play, as they have historically done, a major role in finding cures for these diseases, easing suffering and expanding life expectancy. I don't think there are too many people here who would disagree with that.

But in order to do that, it is clear that we are going to require a well funded National Institutes of Health and a well-funded Food and Drug Administration. I must say, it is beyond my comprehension that year after year, my Republican colleagues appear to work overtime to provide tax breaks to billionaires yet refuse to adequately fund the NIH or the Food and Drug Administration. What set of priorities can anyone have that makes sense to anybody in this country that says: Yes, we are going to give tax breaks to billionaires and large corporations. But no, we are not going to adequately fund the major institutions in this country that are leading the effort to find cures of the terrible diseases that impact our children, our seniors, and everybody in this country.

I would hope that my Republican colleagues listen to the American people and get their priorities right. Poll after poll says no more tax breaks for the rich. Let's invest in health care. Let's invest in cures for the children's diseases that Senator ISAKSON talked about—cancer, Alzheimer's, and all the rest.

Second of all, just ironically and coincidentally, I just asked through my Web site for the American people to send me information on what is going on in their lives with regard to prescription drugs. Every so often, we do that. We sent out an email, and we do Facebook so they can tell me what is going on with regard to their life and prescription drugs. Not surprisingly, the vast majority of the comments we received—and we received about 1,000 comments from people all over this country—are from people who are outraged by the high costs of prescription drugs in this country—a cost that is going up every single day.

People are walking into their pharmacies today and seeing the price of medicines that they have had for 20 years double, for no explanation other than the fact that the drug companies can do it and are doing it so they can make outrageous profits.

In this country, we pay the highest prices in the world for prescription drugs. Senator ISAKSON talked about the terrible diseases facing our kids. He is right, but do you know that every year there are thousands of people in this country who are dying because they cannot afford to pay the highest prices in the world for prescription drugs, while last year the pharmaceutical industry made \$50 billion in profit? The top five companies made \$50 billion in profit.

One out of five people in this country, Senator ISAKSON, when they go to the doctor's office and they get a prescription, you know what, they can't afford to fill that prescription. Talk to the doctors in Georgia. Talk to the doctors in Tennessee. This is what they will tell you: We write the prescriptions, but working class people can't afford to fill them. We have received letters from oncologists all over this country who tell us their cancer patients cannot afford the outrageously high costs of the medicines people need to stay alive.

Maybe, just maybe, it might be time for the Senate to stand up to the pharmaceutical industry and all of their lobbyists here and all of their campaign contributions and say: We are going to stand with the American people who are sick and tired of being ripped off by the drug companies.

Let me read just a few—I am not going to read 1,000 letters, just a few—to give an indication of what is going on in America.

Mark from Plainville, CT, wrote to us and said that his drug for Crohn's disease went up from \$75 a month to \$700 a month. Is anyone here concerned about that? He is worried that he may die. This is what he writes to me:

I am no longer treating my Crohn's disease. I am in a lot of pain and will eventually develop colorectal cancer and die. I am 39 with a wife and two daughters. We simply cannot afford this medication any longer. I have had to leave my job and I am now trying to freelance from home with no success for 4 months. Our home is about to be foreclosed. Is that of interest to my Republican friends or is that not important?

Amanda from Bartlesville, OK, shared this story of her husband's gout medication:

He pays more than \$300 a month for a medicine that was \$4 in 2010.

Maybe someone can explain to me how a medicine that was \$4 in 2010 is \$300 a month now.

He is now disabled because he cannot afford the medicine he needs.

Heather in Taos, NM, cannot afford her EpiPen. We have heard a whole lot about the high price of EpiPens. She said:

I basically haven't had one in years that is not expired. Just hope I don't get stung or I will die.

John in Anchor Point, AK, cannot afford his insulin, which jumped from \$1,400 to \$1,600. He said:

I skip buying groceries when picking up meds. Went home and scraped by. Sold pos-

sessions to make ends meet so we can buy food.

Jerry from Lincoln, NE, cannot afford Gabapentin for shingles. It was \$35, and it is now \$75.

Trish from New Jersey stopped taking her breast cancer medication because it went from \$25 to \$225 for a 3-month supply. Is anyone concerned about that?

Of course we want new drugs to cure diseases, but those new drugs won't do anybody any good if people can't afford them.

We have seen scandal after scandal in the last few months and years. Gilead sold Sovaldi, a drug for hepatitis C, for \$1,000 a pill. Mylan raised EpiPen prices by 500 percent over the last several years, to more than \$600. Martin Shkreli raised the price of Daraprim, a lifesaving AIDS medication, by 5,000 percent. Are we concerned about that? I hope some of us are.

Above and beyond the fact that the pharmaceutical industry is ripping off the American people, the FDA itself tells us that this voucher approach doesn't work. The Government Accountability Office released a report in March that found that there is no evidence this program works to incentivize drug development. Not only does the program not work, it actually slows down the review time of drugs that are clinically important. When one of these vouchers is used, that means FDA staff must take time away from reviewing priority medication in order to review drugs that have bought a pass to the front of the line. By moving one drug faster, more important drugs may move slower.

What we do know is that these vouchers sell for hundreds of millions of dollars. One recent example from last year is that a drug company, United Therapeutic, sold a priority review voucher to another major drug company, AbbVie, for \$350 million.

While nearly one in five Americans cannot afford to fill their prescriptions, the top five drug companies made a combined \$50 billion in profits last year.

There are many reasons why we pay such outrageous prices, but one reason is we continue passing laws written by the pharmaceutical industry and their lobbyists year after year after year. I believe the American people should know that the pharmaceutical industry has spent more than \$3 billion on lobbying since 1998. How is that? Democracy at work. Drug companies charge us the highest prices in the world, and the pharmaceutical industry spent \$3 billion on lobbying. They are all over this place, high-priced lobbyists trying to get us to pass pharma legislation. Just last year the pharmaceutical industry spent \$250 million on lobbying and campaign contributions and employed some 1,400 lobbyists. Maybe the working families of this country need some protection against these lobbyists.

I certainly want to do everything I can to see that this country comes for-

ward with cures for children's diseases and diseases that impact so many Americans of all ages, but we are going to have to have the courage to start taking on the pharmaceutical industry and representing the American people. So I am offering an amendment, along with Senator WARREN, which I hope will pass, which will extend this program, which is going to expire at the end of September, to the end of the year. That will give us an additional 3 months to work together to come up with some serious legislation that addresses not only children's issues but the health care and needs of millions of Americans in general.

I look forward to working with my friends on the other side to come up with a good solution to protect the American people from the outrageously high cost of prescription drugs in this country.

Reserving the right to object, would the Senator modify his request to include the Sanders amendment which is at the desk?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection to the modification?

The Senator from Tennessee.

Mr. ALEXANDER. Reserving the right to object, as chairman of the Senate Health Committee, I will object, but I will work with the Senators from Pennsylvania, Georgia, Massachusetts, and Vermont to do what we need to do during the rest of the day so that the Senate will be able to adopt an extension of this important program to the end of the year, which I think we should be able to do.

I will reserve the remainder of my remarks until the Senator from Massachusetts has a chance to speak.

I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard to the modification.

Is there objection to the original request?

Mr. SANDERS. Yes, I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

The Senator from Massachusetts.

Ms. WARREN. Mr. President, I rise in support of Senator SANDERS' objection and amendment. Massachusetts is home to many of the Nation's best scientists and most innovative biomedical companies. I believe we have a moral imperative to save money and save lives by expanding medical innovation in the United States.

I have been here for almost 4 years. I have spent nearly the entire time working both publicly and privately to try to fix the broken medical innovation system in this country. I will be blunt: It has been maddening because we know what we need to do to fix this problem. We know that medical cures come from taxpayer investments in basic research, followed by private industry making its investments to turn that research into viable treatments. Nobody in Congress seriously disputes that.

Every single person I have talked to here says they support increasing funding for the National Institutes of

Health. Yet for over a decade Congress has decimated the NIH's budget. It has effectively been cut by nearly 25 percent. Those cuts are singlehandedly choking off support for the projects that could lead to the next major breakthrough against ALS, Alzheimer's cancer, and rare pediatric diseases. Those cuts are driving scientists out of the country or out of research entirely. Those cuts are discouraging a whole generation of brilliant young researchers who see no path to launch the work that could save millions of lives. Only in Washington can every single elected official say they are committed to fix something and then do nothing.

Newt Gingrich and I do not agree on much of anything, but we teamed up last year to plead with Congress to address this travesty. Newt Gingrich said: "To allow research funding to languish at a time of historic opportunity when you could be saving lives and saving money takes a special kind of stupidity that is reserved for this city." I agree.

For 2 years, Republicans in the Senate have claimed loudly that they want to do something about this. For a year they talked to Democrats about a comprehensive, bipartisan package that would include investments in NIH and FDA. Then one day they stopped talking and instead started pushing a bunch of small, piecemeal bills through the committee, all without a single dime of new money for medical research, and then declared themselves the conquering heroes of medical innovation.

Now, look, I support some of these bills. I helped write some of these bills. Others, like the Advancing Hope Act, I have serious concerns about. But without new funding for medical research, this bundle of bills will not move the needle on medical innovation. The Advancing Hope Act is an example. I support getting more transformative cures for pediatric rare diseases, but the Advancing Hope Act doesn't put a dime of additional money into medical research or approval—not one dime. This bill just hands drug companies vouchers so they can jump to the front of the line at the FDA. The drug companies love it. Most of them have turned around and sold off their vouchers, sometimes for hundreds of millions of dollars. But the FDA has said there is no evidence this program is effective at incentivizing drug development for rare pediatric diseases.

Who knows what breakthrough cancer or Alzheimer's treatment now takes longer to approve because some giant drug company uses a voucher to move something more lucrative but less important to the head of the line. I am not opposed to these vouchers under any circumstances, but without more, these vouchers cynically ask people with diabetes and people with breast cancer to fight the parents of children with rare pediatric diseases over who gets approved first.

I want cures, and to get them, we need to put more money into the NIH so that we can cure more diseases. We need to put more money into the FDA so they can approve everything that is worth approving as quickly as possible.

Senate Democrats have made their position clear. Whatever our views on these individual policies, we do not support moving piecemeal bills without a real, bipartisan agreement on new investments. Every Democrat on the HELP Committee has cosponsored a serious proposal to provide \$50 billion in new mandatory NIH and FDA funding. Republicans have put no proposal on the table—nothing. Chairman ALEXANDER said publicly that he understood the importance of getting this done, but it has been months and we have seen nothing.

The supporters of this expiring voucher program want to extend it to the end of December. I am willing to do that. I will join Senator SANDERS in that.

I believed Chairman ALEXANDER's promise to work in good faith on a bipartisan package that will actually fix medical innovation in this country. Despite months of silence, I still believe it. I want to give him every opportunity to keep that promise.

If Republicans want to ignore the real problems here and play political games instead, if they want to cynically use sick children and desperate moms in the runup to an election as a political football to avoid actually doing the right thing by these families, I cannot stop them, but I will not play along.

We are losing an entire generation of scientists and researchers because Congress will not face the hard fact that medical research takes money. We are forfeiting cures and treatments that could help people all across this country because Congress will not make the investments in basic research. We are losing our mothers, our fathers, our sons, and our daughters because Congress plays politics with people's lives. I will not play along, and I will do every single thing I can to get the funding we need to support real medical innovation in this country.

I yield the floor.

THE PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Tennessee.

Mr. ALEXANDER. First, Mr. President, I congratulate Senator CASEY and Senator ISAKSON for doing a terrific job of being excellent Senators and coming up with legislation a couple of years ago that has helped children.

We have now heard from the only two U.S. Senators in the whole body, so far, who have voted against this bill this year. We have 22 members on our HELP Committee—Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions. We voted to extend this bill another few years because it has been so successful. The vote was 20 to 2.

You just heard from those very eloquent Senators. They don't like Republicans, they don't like drug companies,

they don't like billionaires, and they asked the question: Well, is anybody listening?

I am listening. Whom do we care about? Let's talk about these 7,800 children at St. Jude's Hospital in Memphis. These are children who are very sick. Many of them will die prematurely. Every single one of them has free care at St. Jude's Hospital thanks to the contributions of many people.

This is what the doctors at St. Jude's Hospital say about the proposal Senator ISAKSON and Senator CASEY have made that has been in the law since 2012 and received 20 votes in our committee against the two votes of the Senators who are on the floor.

St. Jude's doctors who are taking care of these very sick children say:

Priority vouchers (PRVs) provide a very powerful incentive to stimulate drug development in rare pediatric diseases.

Does anybody care about these children in Memphis—

These aren't some people in Washington, in bureaucracies. These are doctors caring for dying children.

The doctors continue:

These conditions often lack the market opportunity to attract significant investment, or may present other significant development obstacles and costs that may deter investment from biopharmaceutical companies.

We may not like drugmakers, but if we need new drugs for dying children, who is going to make the drugs if the drugmakers don't make them? Some bureaucrat in Washington? Some committee member of the Senate? No, no—someone who knows how to make drugs.

This proposal that has been on the books for 5 years says that we will provide an incentive to help these children. It has worked. We voted 20 to 2 in our committee—which is about equally composed of Democrats and Republicans—in favor of extending it. It is important for the American people to know that.

According to the doctors at St. Jude's Hospital in Memphis—remember, they have 7,800 very sick children they are caring for today. They say:

We have witnessed strong evidence that the programs are working.

The Isakson-Casey bill is working.

Continuing:

Support for the Voucher Program is key to facilitating access to new agents important to improving outcomes in pediatric cancers.

We have considered this the way U.S. Senators are supposed to. We brought it up in our committee. We debated it. We had amendments when they were offered. We voted on it, and we voted 20 to 2.

The House of Representatives has also considered this legislation. It has enacted this. This would be part of our 21st century cures legislation that we hope the entire Congress will approve before we leave at the end of the year, but the bill expires at the end of this month so we need an extension.

Every day we delay creates more uncertainty in the marketplace and

makes it less likely that some drugmaker is going to create a new drug to help these children. Now, we may not like drugmakers, some of us; we may not like markets, some of us; we may not like Republicans, some of us; we may not like billionaires, some of us, but if the drugmakers don't make the drugs to help these children, who will do it? When we have an entire committee that has worked through this, I think it is very unfortunate that we don't take the time to extend this for a period of time to create the kind of certainty we need.

On the 21st century cures legislation the Senator from Massachusetts, a diligent Senator and a good member of the committee, talked about, apparently, she is not paying much attention to the work we are doing on the bill. It has been my top priority. I have worked on it daily with Senator MURRAY, the ranking Democrat. I have worked with the President and with the Vice President. We have a bill that the President of the United States would like us to pass because it addresses precision medicine, his top priority.

This same bill addresses the Cancer MoonShot, the Vice President's top priority. The Speaker of the House of Representatives is turning somersaults to try to find a way for us to be able to find the money for that, as well as opioids and other important projects we would like to fund. The majority leader of the Senate has said that if we are able to agree on this bill, it will be the most important bill we will pass this year.

We are doing a very good job in our committee of getting to the point where we can actually turn something into law that the President, the Vice President, the Speaker of the House, and the majority leader would all like to see happen. I thank Senator CASEY and Senator ISAKSON for their help in doing this. My hope is that we can work together, finish our work on this, and pass it shortly after we come back in November.

My last point, regarding doing nothing on funding, is that I don't know what budgets people are reading. Let's stop and talk about this a little bit. Let's talk about the Food and Drug Administration.

According to Mercatus, in 2000, the FDA was funded at a little over \$1 billion. In 2015, that number is \$4 billion. We are about to look into a series of agreements next year, which we will have a chance to vote on, that will add billions of new funding to the FDA.

In our 21st century cures legislation, there are provisions to allow the Commissioner of the FDA to recruit and hire more of the talented experts he needs—another reason we need to pass that bipartisan legislation.

What about funding for research in the United States? According to the New England Journal of Medicine, today the United States—both through the government and through our phar-

maceutical companies—spends nearly as much on biomedical research as all of Europe, all of Japan, and all of China combined.

Let me say that again.

According to the New England Journal of Medicine, the United States of America—publicly and privately—spends nearly as much on biomedical research as all of Europe, all of Japan, and all of China, combined. In addition to that, I think the number is about \$32 billion that we now spend through the National Institutes of Health, mostly on biomedical research at major universities.

I try not to spend my time talking about Democrats. I notice my friends on the other side often say Republican, Republican, Republican. I get a little tired of that because we are working together to get something done, but we do have a Republican majority. Last year, it was under the Republican majority that we added \$2 billion to the National Institutes of Health.

Senator BLUNT led that, but I want to give credit to Senator MURRAY, who is the ranking Democrat on that committee, because without Senator MURRAY and Senator BLUNT, it wouldn't have happened. But give Senator BLUNT credit for it, he happens to be a Republican, if we are being partisan about it. How much money is that? That is \$20 billion over the next 10 years.

This year, the same committee, Senator BLUNT of Missouri and Senator MURRAY of Washington, added another \$2 billion for the National Institutes of Health. Over the next 10 years, that is \$20 billion more dollars. We are up to \$38 billion of new money for the National Institutes of Health over the next 10 years.

If anybody has been paying attention to anything I have said over the last 6 months or any of the discussions I have been having with the President, the Vice President, and the House of Representatives in our committee, we have been talking about \$6 billion, \$7 billion, or \$8 billion additional dollars for Cancer MoonShot, for precision medicine, for the BRAIN initiative, for regenerative medicine, and for a number of things that need to be done. This is the most exciting time in biomedical research we have had. What I just added up was \$20 billion, plus \$18 billion, plus \$6 billion or \$7 billion. That adds up to \$44-\$45 billion of new dollars for the National Institutes of Health over the next 10 years.

While it took bipartisan cooperation, let's say it: We do have a Republican majority in the U.S. Senate, and that is our agenda. That is what we want to do. We just don't talk about it in a partisan way because we usually get better cooperation and better results when we give credit to the other side, which I am pleased to do.

Maybe you don't like drug companies. Then who is going to make the drugs?

We are not talking about drug companies today. We are talking about

7,800 children who are very sick at St. Jude's Hospital and receiving free care. Their doctors have told us that if we don't pass the Isakson-Casey legislation for several more years, we are going to make it less likely that these children will live—less likely that they will live. That is what we are talking about.

We could have a big debate about drug companies. We can raise taxes on billionaires. We can talk about Republicans and Democrats. Let's do that another day. Let's get back to business. Let's do our quiet work in a bipartisan way, which is the way we try to do it in our committee and we have done it. We have had 45 hearings. Forty-one of them have been bipartisan hearings where we have agreed on the witnesses. We get more results than about anybody, but we don't get results by making speeches about each other and making speeches about subjects that aren't the real subject of the day. The real subject of the day is 7,800 very sick children at St. Jude's Hospital.

Their doctors are telling us that if we don't continue incentives that are already working, according to these doctors, if we don't provide more incentives to drugmakers to make the drugs for rare diseases that will keep these children alive, then we aren't doing our job.

I thank Senators ISAKSON and CASEY. By the end of the day, I hope we have accepted Senator SANDERS's motion to extend the program until the end of the year.

What I also hope is, when we come back in November, we will have an agreement—as we are perfectly capable of doing—that begins to move treatments and drugs through the FDA more rapidly so they can get into the medicine cabinets and the doctors' offices at a lower cost and more quickly; that we will have several more billion dollars of funding for the National Institutes of Health; that we will focus on the President's Precision Medicine Initiative with some of that money, on the Vice President's Cancer MoonShot with some of that money, on the BRAIN Initiative with some of that money; and that we will give each other a little bit of a pat on the backs for this past year, appropriating \$20 billion more over the next 10 years for NIH and putting another \$20 billion in appropriations bills this year.

I look forward to the end of the day, when hopefully Senator SANDERS' motion will be adopted and the Isakson-Casey program, which has worked so successfully for these children, will be extended for long enough to create enough certainty in the marketplace so drugmakers will make rare drugs to help these children live. Thank you.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. GARDNER). The Senator from Vermont.

Mr. SANDERS. Mr. President, let me say to Chairman ALEXANDER, I certainly look forward to working with him over the next several months to

come up with a package that makes certain we do everything we can to cure childhood illnesses, which otherwise would be fatal, but that we also understand it is not just 7,800 beautiful kids in that hospital, but there are millions of people in this country who are suffering today because they cannot even afford the medicine that is on the market at the same time as five drug companies—it is not a question of disliking drug companies. It is a question of fact. Five drug companies made \$50 billion in profits last year, charging our people, by far, the highest prices in the world for medicine. One out of five Americans who are sick cannot afford the medicine they need.

An example, one small example, this is the chart of drug prices in the United States versus Canada, with EpiPen, which is on the front pages today. In the United States, it is \$620; in Canada, it is \$290.

Why are we paying twice as much for the same product as a country 50 miles away from where I live?

Crestor, for high cholesterol, is \$730 in the United States, \$160 in Canada. Premarin, for estrogen therapy, is \$421 in the United States, \$84 in Canada.

Look, I have been around the country in the last year, and there are few Americans—very few—who do not understand that the greed of the pharmaceutical industry is causing terrible health problems for millions of people. I read some examples. There are people who are dying because they can't afford the medicine they need. People are cutting their pills in half, which should not be done.

So I do look forward to working with Senator ALEXANDER in the next couple of months to see how we can, in fact, come up with legislation that begins to address one of the great health care crises facing this country, and that is the high cost of prescription drugs and the need to make medicine available to all of our people at an affordable price.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Tennessee.

Mr. ALEXANDER. Mr. President, I see other Senators on the floor who wish to speak, and I will let them do that. Maybe Senator CASEY wishes to conclude.

I look forward to working with Senator SANDERS. He and I have some different points of view, which I guess is obvious, but we can talk about drug companies. We can talk about the fact that one drug company has spent \$3 billion since 1989 on Alzheimer's and is about to offer to the American people a way, for the first time really, to prevent the progression of Alzheimer's, we hope. This is public information currently in clinical trials. Another drug company is about to offer, hopefully, medicine that may actually help Alzheimer's before the symptoms are shown, which would be terrifically important in terms of the grief that we will avoid for Americans and the cost that terrible disease is causing. But that is \$3 billion spent without any

"profit" yet. That is what a marketplace allows. Now, in marketplaces there can be abuses. My point of view is that, generally, what you want to do is have the most amount of competition in the marketplace possible, and that is what we can talk about as we go forward.

I don't think we gain much when we give these speeches about Republicans and Democrats. I don't think people like to hear it; maybe they do. I don't give them, but I am doing it today just because I have heard so much of it from the other side. I don't like it, frankly; I don't like it at all. I mean, I never got a result by talking about my opponents' political party. I never moved an education bill through without giving credit to the other side, and a genuine amount of credit.

I didn't mention that the President himself, with whom I am working on 21st century cures, proposed in his budget to cut the National Institutes of Health by \$1 billion. I could come down here and say that. I could have gone to the committee hearing and said that. I never mentioned it in the hearing because my goal was not to embarrass the President or make a political point. My goal was to see if we could find some consensus to move ahead at the most exciting time of biomedical education. And 20 of the 22 of us voted for this bill.

So I would like to ratchet down the partisan rhetoric. If people want to point out the difficulties with drug companies and with the marketplace and with Republicans and billionaires, there is a time and place for that. But today we are talking about these children—the 7,800 children at St. Jude Hospital. Doctors have told us that if we extend the Isakson-Casey bill for a period of time to give enough certainty so that drug makers will make more drugs to deal with rare diseases, these children will live longer. And 20 of the 22 of us agreed with that, and we would like to see it move forward.

So I am delighted to work with the Senator from Vermont and the Senator from Massachusetts. I am glad we have a temporary solution that will take us through the end of the year, but that is not the best solution because it still provides a lot of uncertainty and will not do as good a job as the doctors say we should do.

I thank the Chair, and I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Pennsylvania.

Mr. CASEY. Mr. President, first of all, I want to thank my colleagues for being here today to debate these issues. I appreciate Senator ISAKSON's work with us—Senators SANDERS, WARREN, and ALEXANDER.

I think we agree on two things, believe it or not. No. 1, both sides of the aisle here want to make progress as it relates to curing rare pediatric diseases. That is No. 1. I think there is agreement on that. No. 2, there is agreement to extend the existing pro-

gram, which has already helped enormously to advance that first cause. We are in agreement to extend that until the end of the year. That is a bipartisan agreement. We will work out the details for that, and we will keep working on these issues when we get back.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Minnesota.

Mr. FRANKEN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Democrats control the next 30 minutes and the Republicans control the following 30 minutes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

ST. CLOUD, MINNESOTA, STABBINGS

Mr. FRANKEN. Mr. President, I rise today to discuss the Central States Pension Fund crisis and a proposal to address that, but before I do, I want to take a moment to talk about the horrific events that unfolded in St. Cloud, MN, this past weekend.

The investigation is ongoing, but we know that last Saturday evening a man dressed in a security guard uniform took to the Crossroads Mall in St. Cloud, MN, and senselessly stabbed nine people. Fortunately, they have all been treated and discharged. This was a heinous attack, and I hope that all the victims and their families know that Minnesotans are thinking of them.

Mr. President, I also want to commend the actions of Jason Falconer, the off-duty police officer who bravely stopped the attacker before he could hurt anybody else. If it weren't for him, we could have seen many more injuries and even the loss of life.

I also want to thank the St. Cloud police force and the police chief, William Blair Anderson, who set an example of how to lead during a crisis. I also thank the first responders and the doctors and the nurses for taking care of the victims.

This event has shaken the city of St. Cloud and our entire State. Such senseless and hate-filled acts have no place in our society. Minnesota law enforcement and the FBI are investigating this event to see whether there were connections between the suspect and terrorist groups and what the motivations of the attacker were. We are going to get to the bottom of what happened.

CENTRAL STATES PENSION FUND

Now, Mr. President, I am pleased to be joined by my colleagues to highlight a very important issue, the multiemployer pension system, which is facing severe funding shortfalls, and what that means for hundreds of thousands of retirees who will get their pensions cut if these funds fail.

Over the last year, a number of my colleagues came to the Senate floor to talk about protecting the pensions of the United Mine Workers of America, the miners who toiled for years in dark, dirty, and dangerous mines to power our country. I am pleased the

Committee on Finance has now taken action to begin moving a bill to address that issue.

But today we are here to talk about another group of retirees who face drastic pension cuts. The Central States Pension Fund provides pensions for 22,000 blue-collar workers in Minnesota and nearly 400,000 nationwide. However, it faces a funding shortfall that means those retirees, including elderly workers and widows and the disabled, could face draconian cuts in less than a decade if Congress fails to act.

Mr. President, those who work hard and are promised retirement security ought to be able to retire with dignity. That is a promise Congress made in 1974 when it enacted a law that guaranteed pensions would not be reduced, and that is what workers thought they could count on after years of hard work. But now that promise may be broken.

If we break that promise, workers like Ken Petersen of South St. Paul, MN, will face spending the rest of their lives in poverty. Ken spent 30 years driving trucks as a Teamster before he retired in 2003. If the Central States fund is allowed to fail, Ken and his wife's retirement plans will be shattered and they will face financial uncertainty for the rest of their lives.

It is wrong for us to abandon the blue-collar Americans who earned a modest retirement after a lifetime of work, and I am not going to stand idly by while those workers have their retirement and their dignity taken away from them.

My approach would be to close a tax loophole that no one defends. It is called carried interest and allows Wall Street bankers and private equity fund managers to pay lower tax rates than most of the Central States Pension Fund members who drive trucks for a living pay. Again, to be clear, no one defends this loophole—not Democrats, not Republicans, and neither of their Presidential candidates. And closing it is one way we could help make sure our retirees get the pensions they have earned.

According to the Joint Committee on Taxation, this loophole will cost taxpayers \$15.9 billion over the next 10 years. That is enough to make sure Central States' retirees are able to have a secure retirement, and I think is a much better use of that money than giving an indefensible tax break to a relatively small group of already very wealthy people.

Here is how carried interest works. When most workers, such as those in the Central States fund, earn a paycheck, their income is subject to tax at ordinary income tax rates. But private equity fund managers have been claiming their income is different simply because their job involves managing money. As a result, they pay taxes at the special low rate reserved for capital gains even if they are risking no money of their own. The same is true for managers of hedge funds if, say, a

stock their fund has held for a year—stock bought with their investors' money—is sold for a profit. The manager gets a percentage of the profit, but they pay capital gains on that income even though they didn't risk any of their money.

People who worked hard—like those truck drivers—were guaranteed their pensions would be there. It is up to us to keep faith with those people by closing this loophole. Again, no one defends this.

Let's not forget what happened on Wall Street less than a decade ago. Risky bets by hedge funds, private equity funds, and big banks caused the biggest financial crisis of our lifetimes. And when that happened, Congress bailed out the banks with \$700 billion of taxpayer money.

Today, those banks and private equity funds are back to business as usual, but retirees from funds like Central States, which was fully funded before the financial crisis, haven't received the same support. Instead, they are going to be facing devastating cuts at times in their lives when they can least afford them.

The hypocrisy is clear, but so far, my colleagues on the other side of the aisle haven't been willing to propose real solutions to fix the pension crisis. Instead, they are offering paper solutions that put the burden entirely on beneficiaries or simply kick the can down the road.

We need a real solution, and that is going to require us to take a good look at our priorities. Do we want to continue to subsidize Wall Street or do we want to help the hard-working men and women who dedicated their lives to driving our trucks, keeping us safe, and maintaining our roads?

I think we need to acknowledge that Federal funds are going to be needed to keep the promises made to our retirees. Our Tax Code is riddled with loopholes that could be closed to fix this problem, but let's start with the most obvious and absurd tax loophole. We should close the carried interest loophole that helps private equity fund managers and hedge fund managers, and invest that money in the hardworking Americans whose retirement is being threatened.

I yield to Senator KLOBUCHAR.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Minnesota.

Ms. KLOBUCHAR. Mr. President, I rise today to also speak about the Central States Pension Fund, and I acknowledge my other colleagues speaking on it, Senator FRANKEN and Senator BROWN as well as Senator WYDEN. I appreciate your being here, as well as the ranking member on the Finance Committee.

ST. CLOUD, MINNESOTA, STABBINGS

Mr. President, before I address that, I also want to address the horrific act of violence that occurred at the Crossroads Center mall in St. Cloud. This is a mall that I have been to many times. It is a thriving mall. A lot of people in that area go there, and, in fact, their

sense of safety was shattered that evening. There were 10 victims. At first they thought there were 9 victims, but a video showed there were 10. One is a pregnant woman who was nine months along. By some grace of God, no one was seriously injured, and no one died.

It was terror that I don't think any of us can imagine. People were there with their families shopping, and this happened. The first thing we know is that the mayor and the chief—Mayor Kleis, whom I have worked with for many years, a former Republican legislator who has been a very strong leader of this town, and Chief Anderson, who has been the chief there for many years—have shown that kind of strength in leaders that you would like. Immediately, they came out and explained to the community what happened and told them the honest truth—that they were still gathering the facts. They got the FBI involved, and this is being investigated as a potential act of terrorism. We still do not know all the facts. We hope to have them soon. Mostly, they were able to bring some calm to the community. They were shopping at the mall—I talked to the mayor last night—to show their citizens that they are not going to let this act of violence bring down their town.

We are well aware that ISIS sent out a statement claiming some responsibility. We do not know if that is true. We do know that the FBI is investigating any terrorist connections that this man has had, and we await the outcome of this investigation.

The one thing we do know is that due to the courageous actions of the off-duty officer, Jason Falconer, lives were saved. Because of the good work of the first responders and the reaction of those present at the mall, lives were saved and no one died. This particular officer was there off-duty and had the presence of mind to come to the rescue of all these people, and we thank him for that.

The last thing I would say about this is, talking to the mayor and having been in the community, I know how hard they have been working to bridge divides. There was a beautiful picture in the Star Tribune, and I am sure in the St. Cloud paper as well, about the rally of unity that they had in the community. They have now had two. One was in the college, and the Somali community spoke and strongly condemned this violence in a way that was very heartfelt.

This community is an important part of the fabric of life in our State and an important part of the fabric of life, as Senator FRANKEN knows, in St. Cloud. We will continue to work with them. We thank the mayor, the chief, Officer Falconer, and all those involved for their leadership.

CENTRAL STATES PENSION FUND

Mr. President, back to the issue of the Central States Pension Fund, I was pleased to see that the Finance Committee addressed some retirement and

pension issues today in their markup. We must also address the Central States Pension Fund. I believe that promises made are promises kept.

The promise made to the workers in the multiemployer pension plans like those in the Central States Pension Fund is simple; that is, the pension that they have earned through their decades of hard work will be there when they retire.

Saving for retirement is often described as a three-legged stool—Social Security on one leg, a pension on one leg, and personal savings on another. A stable and secure retirement relies on all three legs being strong, but some multiemployer pension plans are facing funding challenges that could weaken one of those legs.

Over 10 million Americans participate in a multiemployer pension plan and rely on these benefits for a safe and secure retirement. Multiemployer plans are set up as part of a collective bargaining agreement between workers and many employers generally in one industry.

The Central States Pension Fund is such a plan. It was established in 1955 to help truckers save for their retirement. Today, the Central States Pension Fund includes workers from the carhaul, tankhaul, pipeline, warehouse, construction, clerical, food processing, dairy, and trucking industries.

About 70 multiemployer pension plans are facing funding challenges and do not have sufficient plan assets to pay all of the benefits promised. The Multiemployer Pension Relief Act was added to the Consolidated and Further Continuing Appropriations Act, 2015, in the House. I voted against the Multiemployer Pension Relief Act because I was concerned that this bill would lead to severe pension cuts for our retirees and, in fact, disproportionately impact certain workers in certain States, including Minnesota.

I believe we need to work together to find solutions that maintain the solvency of these multiemployer pension plans without severely penalizing current retirees, active employees, and beneficiaries. I, too, am in favor of closing the carried interest loophole, and I appreciate my colleague's work on this particular solution.

Hundreds of thousands of participants in the Central States Pension Fund still face the real possibility that their hard-earned pensions could be reduced. As I noted, they are mostly in the Midwest. That is why it is called the Central States plan. This affects workers and retirees from these States: nearly 34,000 workers and retirees in Ohio, nearly 31,000 in Michigan, over 21,000 in Minnesota, over 18,000 in Wisconsin, and nearly 1,500 in North Dakota. In fact, seven of the top States in the Central States are Midwestern States.

In September, 2015, Central States submitted a proposal to the Treasury to reduce pension benefits for workers and retirees. Treasury reviewed the

proposal, which would have resulted in benefit cuts for over 270,000 retirees and workers. In May, the workers and retirees narrowly avoided these cuts when the Treasury Department—after going around the country listening to the workers and looking at the plan—rejected the proposal because they felt it did not meet the test under the act.

That doesn't mean this is over. It is far from over. The Central States Pension Fund still faces insolvency by 2025. The current and future retirees could still face cuts. I voted against the act because I was concerned that under this act we might see exactly the kind of cuts that were proposed. What we saw were deep benefit cuts to our workers and retirees, and what we saw was that the size of the potential cuts for the workers, retirees, and beneficiaries was not fairly distributed.

Retirees who are 80 and older and disabled individuals were protected. That was the right thing to do. For everyone else, the possible cuts would leave them with a pension that did not reward their years of work. While many faced cuts of 30 percent, 40 percent, or even 50 percent, I think people would be shocked to learn that over 44,000 people faced pension cuts of over 60 percent and nearly 2,500 people faced possible cuts of over 70 percent.

I do not believe that when my colleagues voted for this, they thought they were actually voting for 70-percent pension cuts, but that actually is the result of that proposed plan. While we understand that there may be changes and that there may be more cuts, or some cuts, there must be a better way to do this than what was proposed.

I heard from people across my State who were trying to figure out how they were going to make ends meet as they faced these drastic cuts. Michael from Shoreview wrote to me about how he was facing a possible cut of 40 percent. Thomas from Sandstone is 71 years old and, after paying into the Central States plan for 30 years, was facing a 60 percent cut. Steve from Maple Grove wrote me to let me know that he is 69 years old and is unable to return to work, but his pension would be cut by 37 percent.

Those are a few examples. Many of these people are in their 60s and 70s, and they should be able to secure in their retirement what they have worked for their entire lives. While we temporarily averted this with the proposal being rejected, we know it is not going to go away. The Central States Pension Fund filed its petition to reduce pension benefits. Since then, an additional eight plans have also filed petitions.

Congress needs to work together to find a bipartisan solution to help pensioners across Minnesota and our country—people who depend on their pensions being there for them in their golden years. We owe it to all Americans who played by the rules and worked hard throughout their lives for a secure pension.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oregon.

Mr. WYDEN. Mr. President, how much time remains on the Franken-Klobuchar request to speak on this issue?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Ten minutes remain.

Mr. WYDEN. Mr. President, I will be very brief. I know Senator BROWN feels very strongly about this, as well, so I am going to make a few remarks and leave time for him. I want to commend Senator FRANKEN and Senator KLOBUCHAR, who have talked to me about this issue many times.

Today in the Finance Committee, with a significant bipartisan vote, we were able to pass the miners legislation to address the health care and retirement needs of those miners. As my two colleagues have pointed out, at its heart, this is the same emergency. Today it is the mine workers. Tomorrow it could be the truckers. The next day it could be the construction workers and the woodworkers in my part of the United States. As my colleagues have said, the reason that is the case is that for generations of Americans, getting a good-paying job came with a simple bargain: You worked hard, you earned a wage and benefits, and those benefits wouldn't be taken away.

Today, bit by bit, that bargain is crumbling. There are two points that I would touch on so that Senator BROWN can have some time, if his schedule permits. I think Senator KLOBUCHAR has made a very good point about how important it is that Congress address this issue because, with respect to troubled systems like Central States, Congress is partially responsible for creating the problem.

As Senator KLOBUCHAR noted, 2 years ago Congress passed a bill—a bill that I was very much opposed to—the Multiemployer Pension Reform Act. It was slipped into a must-pass government funding package, and it gave a green light to slashing benefits in a lot of struggling multiemployer plans. In effect, for a generation of workers, it said: Sorry, times have changed. The benefits that you earned are no longer going to be protected, and the weight of this economic transformation in America is going to fall on you.

It wasn't fair and it wasn't practical. I certainly share the view of my colleagues who said it was a good thing Treasury rejected the proposal that would have cut benefits earlier this year. Obviously we are going to have to take more steps to shore up the Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation, which is a financial lifeline for 10 million workers, and we are going to have to look at a variety of approaches.

I very much share the views Senator FRANKEN spoke about, which Senator KLOBUCHAR supports as well, when he talked about this rotting economic carcass known as the Federal Tax Code and how unfair it is to working families. My colleagues have just pointed out one example.

Let me say that at the heart of the bipartisan tax reform proposals I have written over the last decade is my sense that we now have a tax code that really represents a tale of two systems. If you are influential and well connected, you can pretty much decide what kinds of taxes you are going to pay and when you are going to pay them. A fortunate few basically have that kind of opportunity. But the people my colleagues have been talking about—for example, truckers—don't have a tax code like that. Once or twice a month, those truckers have taxes extracted from their paychecks. They see it on their paychecks. There are no loopholes or anything that states about whether it is carried interest or derivatives or half a dozen other things; they just have their taxes extracted and there are no writeoffs or any kind of figuring out what you are going to pay and when you are going to pay it. It comes right off your paycheck.

We have a lot of heavy lifting to do. Today, it seems to me that Congress began the task. I can tell my colleagues that there is so much work to do to modernize these pension and retirement systems.

Chairman HATCH agreed to a proposal that I made today to allow people to contribute to their IRAs after they are 70½ years old. That proposal was adopted, as Senator FRANKEN may know, sometime in the early 1960s. I won't pretend to be anywhere near as humorous as my colleagues, but I finally said—I thanked Chairman HATCH for adopting my proposal that let's people over 70½ contribute to their IRAs because people are living longer and feeling better. It doesn't seem that it makes much sense to have so many Senators and working Americans younger than the retirement laws that were adopted for a different time.

We have a lot to do. First and foremost, we have to shore up Central States. We will be looking at a variety of approaches on how to do that, and, as both of my colleagues have said, a fundamental part of what we are going to have to do is fix this broken tax system.

When I start talking about the Tax Code as a rotting economic carcass, my wife always says: Will you just stop there, dear, because you are frightening the children? We have small children. The reality is, this Tax Code is infected with loopholes and the inversion virus. It just goes on and on.

As my colleagues have said, it is not right for working families—particularly those who are depending on Central States pensions—to sort of hang in suspended animation, hoping that somehow there is going to be a piece of legislation that will pass through here so that they will get something resembling what they were promised—a dignified retirement based on the pension they earned.

I commend my colleagues for doing this. This comes at the end of the day

where at least we began the long push to pension reform with a successful bipartisan effort on miners, but, as my colleagues have said, this work has just begun.

I thank Senator FRANKEN and Senator KLOBUCHAR for their commitment and their eloquence.

I yield the floor.

Mr. FRANKEN. Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. BROWN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. BROWN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to speak for up to 10 minutes as in morning business.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. BROWN. Mr. President, it has now been 4 months since the U.S. Treasury did the right thing and rejected the Central States Teamsters pension fund plan to cut the premiums they had earned through a lifetime of hard work. That was a win for all of us who urged Treasury to reject these cuts. Most importantly, it was a win for the thousands of retirees who worked so hard to protect what they had earned. However, that win did not solve the underlying issue. It was not even close to the end of this fight. It was the first necessary step. The Central States Pension Fund is still in the red and on a path where in a few short years it will be unable to pay out the benefits it owes to our retirees.

If a pension fund is in bad shape, it is our job to fix it, not to break promises to Americans who have worked their whole lives to earn those pensions. This is retirement security these Teamsters have worked for, fought for, and sacrificed raises for.

I remind my colleagues—especially those who spend much of their effort here fighting organized drives for unions, oppose any effort to strengthen unions, and attempt to pass legislation to weaken unions—that at the negotiating table time and time again since the Wagner Act passed 75 years ago, workers have given up wages in order to fund pensions and health care in their later years. That is good for them, it is good for their families, it is good for their communities, and it is good for our society because it means they are prepared in their older years and won't rely on the State to keep them going. Of course, they still get Social Security and all of that, but they are prepared because they have given up wages today for benefits in the future. We should applaud them instead of criticizing the UAW, the Teamsters, and the steelworkers for their “legacy costs.”

These are pensions that they gave up health care packages for and were

promised they would earn over a lifetime of hard work. Just ask Rita Lewis. She is a friend of mine from Westchester, OH, in southwest Ohio. She knows a thing or two about hard work. Her husband Butch worked as a trucker for 40 years with the promise that the pension he earned would be there to care for his family after he retired. When the pension came under threat, he worked to protect it for himself, his beloved Rita, and hundreds of thousands of other Teamsters. Rita has been left to continue Butch's fight alone. He passed away on New Year's Eve due to a stroke, which some have attributed, at least in part, to the stress he faced in fighting for his Teamster brothers and sisters in support of their pensions.

Butch told us that the cuts being forced on retirees amount to a war against the middle class and the American dream, and he was right. That war has already claimed enough victims.

We used to have a compact in this country that promised that if you work hard, play by the rules, and do what people expect you to do, you will be able to spend time with your grandchildren and not worry about how to make ends meet. Workers have more than held up their end of the bargain. It is time for both parties to come together and hold up our end before we leave town.

This Senate, as we have heard repeatedly, has not done its job. Under Leader MCCONNELL, this Senate has been in session less than any Senate in the last 60-plus years. It is simply not doing its job. We are not doing what we should on Zika. We are not doing what we should on the coal miners' pension. We are not doing what we should on Central States. We are not doing what we should to confirm a Supreme Court Justice. It will be the longest time since the Civil War that a Supreme Court spot has been vacant.

We owe it to our constituents on this one and on others not to leave town but to support a bipartisan, long-term solution to protect the benefits they earned and they were promised. This fix needs to be sustainable from now into the future, not the piecemeal plan that addresses problems with current policy but does nothing to solve the underlying issues.

Our Teamsters and their families need the peace of mind to know this nightmare is finally behind them. We need a plan that is bipartisan so we can get this done.

I was encouraged this morning when we held a markup on a plan to deal with the mine workers' pension, which is also under threat. We have had some good bipartisan work to find possible solutions to this crisis. We need the same spirit of cooperation on behalf of our Teamsters.

My wife and I live in Cleveland, OH, in ZIP Code 44105. The ZIP Code where my wife and I live, in 2007, had more foreclosures in the first half in 2007 than any ZIP Code in the United

States. I drive through this neighborhood and there are still far too many homes boarded up, still far too many families dislocated, still far too many children just pulled from one school district to another.

The pages sitting here—I assume most of them have pretty stable lives, where they are able to go to school year after year with the same friends, same classrooms, same schools, same teachers, but think about it. What we all do on this floor we are all paid well for. We have good benefits. For some reason, we don't think other Americans should have the same health care benefits we do, and that is a whole other issue. We don't think enough about people who struggle, who might have their house foreclosed on, who might have been evicted. We don't think about those kids who go from one school district to another. We don't think about these Teamsters families. You are 65 years old and you are retiring. You have planned your life in a way that your Social Security—\$1,100, \$1,200 \$1,300 a month—your retirement pension from the Teamsters, from Central State, you have calculated that. You know you are not going to be rich, but you are going to be comfortable enough, and you start having sleepless nights thinking about what is going to happen to your pension.

Lincoln used to say he wanted to get out of the White House. Staff said: Stay here. Win the war. Free the slaves. Lincoln said: No, I have to get out of the White House and get my public opinion baths. Pope Francis exhorted his parish priests to go out and smell like the flock, with all the Biblical connotations of that.

In this body, we don't think very much. We don't go enough to a labor hall or to a church basement or to a veterans hall and just sit there and listen to people's problems.

The person who sat at this desk right before I did was Jay Rockefeller, the Senator from West Virginia. He used to go out by himself with no media and spend 2½ hours speaking to the miners in West Virginia. He said: I learned to listen to them with soft nods and soft eyes, to really listen and look in their eyes and pay attention to what their lives were like. He was a Rockefeller and had no financial struggles, but he recognized he needed to talk to people who did.

That is whom I want my colleagues to think about, not to go to another fundraiser at a fancy restaurant or spend their time at a country club in Dallas or wherever they live but instead start thinking about what these Teamsters' lives are like, when they expected this pension and are not getting it. Think about these widows of mine workers, understanding that mine workers are more likely to die younger from illness or from dangerous work or from injury than most workers in this country and certainly younger than Senators. Think about those mine

workers' widows who might lose their pensions because the Republican leader in this body doesn't like unions and he doesn't like the mine workers and he has blocked us from doing this. This is not personal. I was just on the stage with Senator McCONNELL. He is a nice man. I like him, but he is not doing his job. The Senate is not doing its job to take care of these workers who have huge numbers of veterans among the Teamsters, a lot more than there are veterans in the U.S. Senate.

We have a lot of work to do, and we shouldn't be leaving here without doing our jobs.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Ms. STABENOW. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. LEE). Without objection, it is so ordered.

NOMINATION OF MERRICK GARLAND

Ms. STABENOW. Mr. President, it has been 189 days since President Obama nominated a distinguished jurist, Merrick Garland, to the U.S. Supreme Court.

I know there are a lot of issues on people's minds every day because they are working hard and taking the kids to school and putting food on the table and all of the hard work that goes on every day for families, and sometimes talking about the Supreme Court may seem a little abstract to people. I want to speak a little bit about why Americans should care, beyond the fact that we all care about the fact that we have three branches of government under our Constitution, and we need them all fully functioning.

That was the point of our Founding Fathers, to make sure we had three functioning branches, and right now we have one that is not fully functioning. In fact, when they sit, starting October 3, there is going to be a vacant chair because we will not have fulfilled the responsibility of the U.S. Senate of confirming someone for that ninth seat.

Why does that matter to people? Well, over our lifetimes, great debates have gone on about quality education and equal access to schools regardless of where a child lives. It is very important not only for children and for families but for an economy that can function and a country that can function.

Very important decisions have been made that affect every neighborhood in America, every family in America. We have seen issues related to equality in the workplace and in housing and access to credit, if you want to buy a house or you want to start a business. We have seen a whole range of issues that directly affect all of us. Frankly, the third branch of government, as we know, is a check on us, a check on Congress, and on the Presidency to make sure we have the watchdog looking at what we are doing from the lens of the

U.S. Constitution and our Bill of Rights, and making sure we are all living up to that document that is the cornerstone of our country.

So the Supreme Court matters. What happens matters.

Years ago, in 1937—I don't think any of us were here; if we were, we weren't very old at that time—but there was a case called *West Coast Hotel v. Parrish*. It happened in 1937. Elsie Parrish worked as a maid in Washington State and she sued to be paid the \$14.50 a week she was owed under the Washington State law. Her case made it all the way to the Supreme Court, and it was settled in a 5-to-4 decision. Obviously, it was a very close vote, and without that majority, we wouldn't have a minimum wage today. That was decided by the U.S. Supreme Court in a 5-to-4 decision.

Today we all understand that everybody who works hard every day ought to be able to be above the poverty line. I certainly believe that, and we certainly have much to do to make sure our minimum wage keeps up, but if we didn't have that case, people would have a much lower standard of living. We wouldn't necessarily have a minimum wage that sets a floor for everyone's wages in America, as well as addresses equal pay as it relates to wages across the country.

There are so many ways in which the Court impacts our lives. We have had multiple health care decisions, certainly, as it relates to the Affordable Care Act and whether we will have competitive health exchanges so people can purchase insurance at lower rates, and whether we are all in this together so that if we all have insurance, then we are able to have important policies fulfilled, such as no preexisting conditions, so that if you have cancer or your child has diabetes or you have had a heart attack or some other chronic disease, you can purchase health insurance. This is all tied up in implications from Court decisions that relate to health care, and multiple other decisions that relate to health care, and whether 20 million people who now have health care in our country would be having health care if it were not for a Supreme Court decision or decisions as it relates to health care policy.

So workers and families across America need nine Supreme Court Justices. We need to make sure that when October 3 comes along and the picture is taken of the U.S. Supreme Court, there is not a vacant seat here.

We have heard Justice Kagan, for example, who said: A tie does nobody any good. Presumably, we are here for a reason. They are there to resolve cases that need deciding and answer hotly contested issues that need resolving. They can't do that with a tie vote.

The fact is, unfortunately, the Republican majority is refusing to even give Judge Garland a hearing despite the fact that he has been praised over the years by Members on both sides of the aisle for his integrity and his commitment to the judiciary. It makes one

wonder why it is that this seat is being left open. There can be really only one conclusion, and that is that the seat is being left open for the Republican nominee, even though Republican colleagues are stepping away at every turn from the comments made by the nominee and distancing themselves. They are basically saying: We think the Republican nominee should make that appointment. Even though he has no respect for the judiciary, they believe he should be appointing the new Supreme Court Justice. That can be the only conclusion as to why we would see the majority waiting right now. I realize it makes no sense. We will see the third branch of government effectively go for a year, maybe more, without being able to fully function because of people not being willing to do their job because they are waiting to have Mr. Trump fill that seat. I find that embarrassing and extremely concerning for all of us.

It is time for Senate Republicans to do their job. It is very simple. We all have a job to do. None of us would be able to just tell our employer that a major part of our job is something that we just don't feel like doing for a year, so we are not going to do it. We could say that, but when I talk to people about that, they say: Yeah, chances are I would be fired. I certainly wouldn't be paid if I didn't do my job. Yet here, despite our constitutional responsibility to fill that spot, the Senate Republican majority is not doing its job.

Doing our job doesn't mean we have to vote yes. We can vote yes; we can vote no. You can vote yes or no in a hearing, yes or no on the floor. But we have a constitutional responsibility to consider a nominee from the President, to meet with him, to consider his record, to ask questions, to have a hearing, to have a vote, and then people can vote yes or no. You can vote yes or no, but we do have an obligation to vote.

From my perspective, there is no way I can explain to people back home in Michigan why that seat has been left open for any valid reason, unfortunately, other than politics, and that is just not good enough when it comes to fulfilling our job and making sure the third branch of government can fully do its job.

Mr. President, I am calling on the Republicans to hold a hearing. We still have time to hold a hearing, and we can hold a vote before we leave. This is a choice by the majority—a conscious choice—but there is time to hold a hearing and there is time to have a vote so that when October 1 comes, there will be the full nine U.S. Supreme Court Justices sitting, ready to do their job.

Do your job. That is what we need to have happen.

Thank you, Mr. President.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mrs. SHAHEEN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

SPECIAL IMMIGRANT VISA PROGRAM

Mrs. SHAHEEN. Mr. President, I have come to the floor today to once again urge that we extend the Special Immigrant Visa Program for Afghan interpreters who put their lives on the line while serving alongside Americans in Afghanistan. Unless we act, Congress is going to let this program lapse in just a matter of months. We will abandon thousands of Afghans who helped our men and women on the ground during the long conflict in Afghanistan. It is no exaggeration to say that this is a matter of life and death. Afghan interpreters who served the U.S. mission are being systematically hunted down by the Taliban, and we must not abandon them.

The United States promised to protect these Afghans, who served our mission with great loyalty and at such enormous risk. It would be a stain on America's national honor to break this promise. It would also carry profound strategic costs. U.S. forces and diplomats have always relied on local people to help us accomplish our mission. We continue to need this assistance in Afghanistan. We need the support in other places in the future. So we have to ask why anyone would agree to help the United States if we abandon those who have assisted us in the past. That is exactly why the former commander of U.S. Forces in Afghanistan, GEN David Petraeus, and his predecessor, GEN Stanley McChrystal, have pleaded with Congress to extend the Afghan SIV Program.

In a recent letter to Congress, more than 30 prominent generals, including Gen. John Allen, the former commander in Afghanistan; GEN George Casey, the former commander in Iraq; and two former Chairmen of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, GEN Richard Myers and GEN Hugh Shelton, also urged the Congress to extend the program.

In addition, our soldiers and marines are very interested in protecting the interpreters who served with them in Afghanistan. Many of them owe their lives to the interpreters who went into combat with them.

In recent years, I have gotten to know former Army CPT Michael Breen. He is a Granite Stater who served with the infantry in Iraq and led paratroopers in Afghanistan. He speaks with admiration about one interpreter in particular, an Iraqi woman in her early twenties named Wissam. On one occasion, Captain Breen and his soldiers were at a small forward operating base in Iraq. A man approached them, frantically pointing to his watch and indicating an explosion with his hands. The Americans didn't speak Arabic, so they couldn't tell if the man was trying to warn them or threaten them.

Wissam hurried toward Captain Breen to assist. Wissam was beloved by her American comrades, always cheerful and always willing to help. She listened to the man and said that he was warning of an IED on the main road.

Captain Breen later said: "A trusted interpreter can be the difference between a successful patrol and a body bag." He noted that every night he and his fellow soldiers would hunker down in their heavily guarded perimeter, but Wissam would leave the compound and go home. One evening after she left the American compound, three gunmen ambushed her car. She was killed—one more interpreter who paid the ultimate price for serving the American mission.

Captain Breen later said: One day there will be a granite monument with the names of all the American servicemembers who died in Iraq and Afghanistan. Wissam deserves to have her name on that monument because she took great risks and gave her life while serving the United States.

As many of our colleagues know, the SIV Program allows Afghans who supported our mission and faced grave threats as a result to seek refuge in America. To be eligible, new applicants must demonstrate at least 2 years of faithful and valuable service on the ground with Americans. To receive a visa, they must also clear a rigorous screening process that includes an independent verification of their service and then an intensive interagency security review.

A typical example is an Afghan interpreter who served with U.S. forces from 2008 to 2015. Because he is in danger, I am not going to use his name. Last December, he was gravely wounded in an IED attack that robbed him of one eye and it destroyed his vision in the other. He applied for a special immigrant visa after being wounded, and he is in the early stages of the interagency vetting process. But unless Congress acts, there may not be a visa available for him once he completes that vetting.

We know that the service of these individuals has been critical to our successes in Afghanistan. In some cases recipients of special immigrant visas have continued to serve the U.S. mission after arriving in this country. One promptly enlisted in the U.S. Armed Forces and later worked as a cultural adviser to the military. Another graduated from Indiana University and Georgetown. He has worked as an instructor at the Defense Language Institute. A third, who worked as a senior adviser in the U.S. Embassy, now serves on the board of a nonprofit, working to promote a safe and stable Afghanistan.

These many contributions help explain why senior U.S. commanders and diplomats have urged Congress to extend the Afghan SIV program. Appearing last week at a Senate Armed Services Committee hearing, Army Chief of Staff GEN Mark Milley added strong support. Speaking of Afghan interpreters he said: "Those are brave men

and women who have fought along our side and there are American men and women in uniform who are alive today because a lot of those Afghans put their lives on the line."

At that same hearing, Marine Corps Commandant Gen. Robert Neller also stressed the importance of the program and the need for Congress to extend it. Their view is shared by our senior diplomats.

Ambassador Ryan Crocker, who served in Afghanistan from 2011 to 2012 recently wrote:

Taking care of those who took care of us is not just an act of basic decency; it is also in our national interest. American credibility matters. Abandoning these allies would tarnish our reputation.

Well, I agree. Indeed, I think there is overwhelming bipartisan support in both houses of Congress for extending the Afghan SIV program. Yet, because of the opposition of a handful of Members, Congress, by default, could allow this program to expire in a matter of months. This would put in jeopardy the lives of thousands of Afghans who have served alongside our fighting forces.

Make no mistake, it would also jeopardize our reputation as a country that keeps its promises and stands by those who assist our missions. In past years, Senators have overwhelmingly supported the authorization of additional special immigrant visas for Afghan interpreters.

On both sides of the aisle, we have agreed that it is important to make good on our promise to these Afghan allies. But sadly, this year has been different. Several Members have objected. It is evident to me that the anti-immigration passions that have been stoked during this Presidential campaign by Donald Trump have contributed to this impasse.

The irresponsible rhetoric about immigrants is offensive to American values and it ignores what makes America great. Across nearly four centuries, immigrants have brought their energy and talents to our country, building the most successful and dynamic economy on Earth.

Our Nation has always been welcoming to immigrants. In fact, all of us here are immigrants, unless we are Native Americans. We should be especially welcoming to those who served alongside American soldiers and marines in combat and have been so essential to carrying out our mission in Afghanistan.

The Iraq and Afghan Veterans of America and other organizations representing hundreds of thousands of veterans of the U.S. Armed Forces recently addressed a letter to Members of Congress. In that letter, they respectfully but forcefully urged Congress to reauthorize the special immigrant visa program.

I want to quote from this letter, because I think it reflects the words of these American veterans:

Military service instills in a person certain values: Loyalty. Duty. Respect. Honor. In-

tegrity. . . . Breaking our word directly violates these values. Many of us can point to a moment when one of our foreign allies saved our lives—often by taking up arms against our common enemies. . . . Since our first days in boot camp, we accepted and practiced the value: "leave no one behind." Keep our word. Don't leave anyone behind.

If we fail to extend the SIV program, Congress will have one more opportunity and only one more opportunity this year. That opportunity will come in the session following the election.

We must seize this opportunity to do the right thing for our country and for the Afghan interpreters whose lives are at risk. We would never leave an American warrior behind on the battlefield. Likewise, we must not leave behind the Afghan interpreters who served side by side with our warriors and diplomats. We made a solemn promise to these brave people. I am going to do everything I can to ensure that we keep this promise.

I urge my colleagues, when Congress returns in November, to join me on a bipartisan basis for a program that has had bipartisan support. We can extend the Afghan Special Immigrant Visa Program. We must do that. It is in our national security interests to keep this promise that we have made.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. LEE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. TILLIS). Without objection, it is so ordered.

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. LEE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate be in a period of morning business, with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

DIXON POLICE DEPARTMENT SAFE PASSAGE INITIATIVE

Mr. DURBIN. In the last 2 years, I have spoken with so many Illinoisans about the heroin and prescription opioid epidemic. I have heard many different perspectives, including those from law enforcement, health care providers, criminal justice systems, the pharmaceutical industry, Federal oversight agencies, parents, loved ones, and recovering addicts.

I have learned that there is no town too small and no suburb too wealthy to avoid this crisis of addiction and overdose. Opioids and heroin are affecting communities all across the country.

Last November, I travelled to Dixon, IL, to learn about their work to combat the scourge of prescription opioid misuse. That is where I met chief of po-

lice Danny Langloss of the Dixon Police Department, who is leading an innovative effort with the Lee County Sheriff's Department to address this problem.

Chief Langloss told me that the town had experienced a spike in opioid overdose deaths, which was quite uncommon for the area. As a result, the Dixon Police Department launched a new plan, one that was unconventional for law enforcement, but had proven to be effective in other parts of the country.

They started the Safe Passage Initiative, a program that promotes treatment alternatives to arrest and incarceration. The police department put the word out that, if residents suffering from addiction came forward for help and turned in their drug paraphernalia, they would be assisted in finding addiction treatment rather than being arrested, so long as they did not have outstanding warrants. This program is a model for other communities. It embodies the public health approach to this epidemic that views substance abuse as a disease and not purely a criminal matter.

Well, what has happened? Immediately after the announcement, the police department had dozens of residents come forward, asking for help. They were provided with social services and rehabilitation options. Since the program's initiation, the Dixon Police Department has helped to place more than 100 individuals into treatment. This is quite the cause for celebration, especially in a small, rural community where it can be incredibly difficult to find open treatment slots. Months later, many of these local residents are now clean and on the path toward recovery.

What else has happened? Crime is down, and the jail cells are not nearly as full as they once were. Rather than arresting addicts for petty crimes that feed their addictions, they are being steered towards long-term help.

Today I would like to celebrate the 1-year anniversary of this program and commend the Dixon Police Department, Chief Danny Langloss, and their partners in the treatment and advocacy community who have helped to make this program a success. The program has now expanded to multiple neighboring counties, including Whiteside County and Livingston County. When we talk about this opioid epidemic and the need for all stakeholders to step up and do their part, the Safe Passage Initiative is a worthy effort that is helping to turn the tide.

Today there is a network of more than 145 police departments and 300 treatment centers that are taking this commonsense approach to addressing the opioid crisis.

It is true that real barriers remain. I know that the Dixon Police Department struggles at times to find available beds for individuals that come forward to their program. And that is why

I am working to expand access to addiction treatment by removing an old Medicaid rule, known as the IMD exclusion, which will help more people get the care they need. I am also working to increase funding for treatment centers and have succeeded in changing Federal regulations so that more individuals can receive effective treatment services.

Across our Nation, there are an average of 77 drug overdose deaths each day. In Illinois, we experienced approximately 1,700 heroin and prescription opioid overdose deaths in 2014, a 29 percent increase from 2010. With the leadership of the Dixon Police Department and the dedication of its partners, we will help make a difference for those suffering from addiction. I congratulate them on the 1-year anniversary of the Safe Passage Initiative and look forward to greater success and expansion across the State in the future.

TRIBUTE TO ROBERT JORDAN

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, Sunday, September 25 marks the end of an era. After 43 years of covering the news in Chicago, Robert Jordan will officially anchor his last newscast on "Chicago's Very Own" WGN 9. Mr. Jordan, an Atlanta native, is unique in journalism. Instead of moving from market to market, he landed with WGN in 1973 just 3 years into his career and never left the city. Outside of a 2-year stint as a Midwest correspondent for CBS, Mr. Jordan was a WGN fixture.

Mr. Jordan has enjoyed a reputation of being a serious anchor and reporter while maintaining a sense of humor for the lighter moments. Since 1995, Mr. Jordan has been coanchoring the weekend newscasts with Jackie Bange. Video of their secret handshakes during commercial breaks has gone viral, with one such clip earning more than 7 million views on YouTube.

In 2014, Mr. Jordan was named as the first journalist-in-residence for the University of Chicago's Careers in Journalism, Arts, and Media program. At the time of announcement, Mr. Jordan told an industry reporter that he was "eager to work with young journalists and help guide them at this challenging time in our profession." There is no doubt those students had a tremendous opportunity to learn from one of the best, but those students weren't the first to learn from Mr. Jordan. His daughter Karen followed in his footsteps and now is a news anchor at WLS 7 in Chicago. Mr. Jordan's son-in-law Christian Farr is a reporter at WMAQ 5, so delivering the news to millions of viewers in Chicago truly has become the family business.

Mr. Jordan's work in education was a natural fit for a man who earned a Ph.D. in philosophy of education with a minor in ethics from Loyola University

Chicago in 1999 after receiving degrees from Northeastern Illinois University and Roosevelt University.

Before he picked up a microphone, Mr. Jordan served our Nation as a surgical assistant in the U.S. Army. He continues to serve through his role on the boards of several community organizations.

With retirement providing some free time on the weekends, Mr. Jordan said he plans to go to fun events with his wife, Sharon, that he missed out on while working. He is also going to continue his work with the Greater Illinois Chapter of the Alzheimer's Association on a unique program called the Memory Preservation Project. Mr. Jordan interviews people who are newly diagnosed with Alzheimer's for the project and creates a video of cherished family memories before the wretched disease robs victims of their ability to recall events in detail. With a new person being diagnosed with Alzheimer's every 67 seconds, there are many families affected by this terrible disease.

Mr. Jordan has promised to turn up from time to time when WGN needs him to fill in for a colleague, but Sunday is truly the end of an era in Chicago journalism.

I wish a happy retirement to one of "Chicago's Very Own," Robert Jordan.

VERMONT PRIDE RETURNS AN ICONIC BUILDING HOME

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, Vermonters have long believed that the preservation of our history, from buildings to manuscripts to celebratory traditions, inform the present and future as much as they honor the past. Last month, the people of Orleans County, in Vermont's rural Northeast Kingdom, came together to restore an historic school house to its original location. What makes this story all the more remarkable is that the physical journey to return the schoolhouse was undertaken by a team of 40 oxen assembled by residents and chapters of the 4-H.

It was Alexander Twilight's vision, as headmaster of the school, to have a central school in every Vermont county that would bring together and educate Vermont's students from neighboring towns.

Born and raised in Corinth, VT, Alexander Twilight studied at Middlebury College and became the first African American known to have graduated from a U.S. college or university. An active community member, Twilight was not only an educator, but also served as a local minister and politician.

In Vermont, we take great pride in being a forward-thinking State. This progressive nature dates back to the mid-1800s, pre-American Civil War, when the town of Brownington in Orleans County was an intellectual hub in

New England. Twilight, and his beloved Orleans County Grammar School, have become a symbol of these times.

The recent move of the schoolhouse by the pulling of a team of oxen, coaxed on by area children as they walked beside the team, would surely have delighted Mr. Twilight. I ask unanimous consent that an August 2, 2016, article from The Burlington Free Press, "1823 school to move by oxen to original site," be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

[From the Burlington Free Press, Aug. 2, 2016]

1823 SCHOOL TO MOVE BY OXEN TO ORIGINAL SITE

(By Sally Pollak)

An 1823 schoolhouse will be returned to its original site Monday when 40 oxen pull the Orleans County Grammar School one-third of a mile down Hinman Settler Road in Brownington. The journey by oxen will take the school from Brownington village to a neighborhood of historic and educational significance.

The school will return to its place near the Old Stone House Museum, a four-story building that was constructed in 1836 to be the school dormitory. The granite dormitory, called Athenian Hall, was built by Alexander Twilight, who served as the school's headmaster from 1829 until a stroke in 1855. Twilight died two years later.

Twilight, who was black, grew up in Corinth and graduated from Middlebury College in 1823. He was the first African American person to graduate from a college or university in this country, according to Middlebury and other sources.

"Alexander Twilight actually imagined that this was going to become a big center of learning," said Peggy Day Gibson, director of the Old Stone House Museum. "When he built the Old Stone House as a dorm in 1836, I think he envisioned that this was the first big building. He felt that a central school, a really good institution in every county, was the way to go."

The school fell into disuse after the Civil War, the school's account book indicates. It appears the school did not operate from 1865 until 1870, Gibson said. By then, it had moved from its location at Prospect Hill into the village center, Gibson said.

"It was more convenient" to have the school in the village, Gibson said. The relocation was in keeping with a trend to decentralize education, a movement that was opposed by Twilight when he served in the Vermont Statehouse, according to Gibson.

Twilight's election to the Vermont Legislature in 1836, representing Brownington, made him the nation's first black elected official.

"Alexander Twilight thought education is better served if you have a very high quality central school," she said.

But local towns, including Barton, Craftsbury, Derby and Glover, began to establish their own schools. "One by one these towns got their own schools," Gibson said. "They took back their kids and their tax money."

STUDENTS FROM BROWNINGTON AND BEYOND

In Twilight's life, Orleans County Grammar School educated students from

Brownington, surrounding farm towns, and Quebec. The dormitory housed 50 students, boys and girls. Twilight and his wife, Mercy Twilight, housed 11 female students on the top floor of their house across the way.

Students moved to the grammar school after attending one room schoolhouses in their villages through eighth grade. Under Twilight's direction, Orleans County Grammar School taught students from grades nine through the first two years of college. The school offered classes in Greek, Latin, trigonometry, physics, chemistry and other subjects, Gibson said.

As its curriculum expanded, Twilight saw the need for a dormitory—a building that bears a striking resemblance to Painter Hall at Twilight's alma mater. The building, which opened as a museum in 1925, has Twilight's signature on the back of a fourth-floor door.

Twilight was a teaching principal who also served as minister of the Brownington Congregational Church. Services were held on the second floor of the school before a church was built in 1841. The church and the school (in its original site) were on either side of the town green.

Moving the school back to this place will enable the historical society to tell the story of a region more fully and accurately, Gibson said.

"There has always been this desire of the Orleans County Historical Society—which owns and manages the museum—to try to get the neighborhood back to its (original) configuration," Gibson said. "To tell the story, the history, it will be great to have the school back here."

The enclave of historic buildings in Brownington includes the former home of Samuel Read Hall, a colleague of Twilight's at Orleans County Grammar School. Hall taught at the school and was, according to Gibson, the country's first teacher-educator.

Hall founded the first teacher training school, which was in Concord. He was the author of the first training manual for teachers published in this country, "Lectures on School Keeping," Gibson said. Hall succeeded Twilight as headmaster.

(The museum purchased Hall's house in 2005, and restored it in 2008. It is used for a variety of events, including on Monday a barbecue for the oxen teamsters.)

"This was a really happening, intellectual vibrant neighborhood, all built during the 1820s and 1830s," Gibson said. "It was a center of progressive education in New England. This was the main road, the stage route, between Boston and Montreal, and this is what was happening."

TOWN GIVES SCHOOL TO HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Last year at Town Meeting, the people of Brownington voted to give the grammar school to the Orleans County Historical Society, according to Gibson and the town clerk.

Terms of the gift include the building's continued function as a community gathering place. The Brownington Grange, for example, has met on the second floor of the building since 1874, and will continue to do so at the new site, Gibson said.

With the addition of the school, Orleans County Society Historical Society now owns seven historical buildings in Prospect Hill, built from 1823 to 1841. The Brownington neighborhood is on the National Register of Historic Places, Gibson said.

The 40 animals that will move the school Monday come from 4-H groups in Randolph and North Haverhill, New Hampshire, and from local residents, Gibson said.

Messier House Moving from East Montpelier will move the building onto the road. The oxen will get hitched to the old school, and start walking.

"If the oxen can pull it up the road, it will be smooth as silk," she said. "This is performance art."

S.J. RES. 39

Mr. RUBIO. Mr. President, despite my longstanding concerns about Saudi Arabia's record on human rights, and political and religious liberties, this resolution of disapproval would undermine America's relationship with a key security partner in the Middle East while doing nothing to address critical threats in the region. The Obama administration's disastrous nuclear deal and ransom payments to Iran have emboldened the regime's leaders to sow discord and instability in the Middle East, undermining the trust of our Sunni Arab partners, including Saudi Arabia. In its quest for regional hegemony, Iran is attempting to encircle Saudi Arabia by supporting operations in Iraq, Lebanon, Syria, and Yemen; yet this resolution does not address Iran's role in any of these conflicts, including Yemen, where Houthi elements have forced the elected government from Yemen's capital. This conflict is hindering our ability to combat ISIS and al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula.

I urge the Saudi-led coalition to make every effort to protect civilians in Yemen, and I urge the Obama administration to continue assisting the coalition in limiting civilian casualties through targeting and other measures. But Iran must cease its direct and indirect support for those causing chaos and instability in Yemen. Rather than empowering our partners and standing up to our enemies, this resolution would send the wrong message at a time when our partners are already doubting American commitment and resolve.

VOTE EXPLANATION

Mr. JOHNSON. Mr. President, I was necessarily absent for the rollcall vote on passage of H.R. 5985 due to my appointment by President Obama as representative to the 71st Session of the General Assembly of the United Nations. I am in full agreement with the Senate's unanimous approval to extend expiring authorities of the Department of Veterans Affairs. Had I been present, I would have joined my colleagues in voting yea.

ARMS SALES NOTIFICATION

Mr. CORKER. Mr. President, section 36(b) of the Arms Export Control Act requires that Congress receive prior notification of certain proposed arms sales as defined by that statute. Upon such notification, the Congress has 30 calendar days during which the sale may be reviewed. The provision stipulates that, in the Senate, the notification of proposed sales shall be sent to the chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee.

In keeping with the committee's intention to see that relevant informa-

tion is available to the full Senate, I ask unanimous consent to have printed in the RECORD the notifications which have been received. If the cover letter references a classified annex, then such annex is available to all Senators in the office of the Foreign Relations Committee, room SD-423.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

DEFENSE SECURITY
COOPERATION AGENCY,
Arlington, VA.

Hon. BOB CORKER,
Chairman, Committee on Foreign Relations,
U.S. Senate, Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. CHAIRMAN: Pursuant to the reporting requirements of Section 36(b)(1) of the Arms Export Control Act, as amended, we are forwarding herewith Transmittal No. 16-46, concerning the Department of the Air Force's proposed Letter(s) of Offer and Acceptance to the Government of Japan for defense articles and services estimated to cost \$1.9 billion. After this letter is delivered to your office, we plan to issue a news release to notify the public of this proposed sale.

Sincerely,
JAMES WORM
(For J.W. Rixey, Vice Admiral,
USN, Director).

Enclosures.

TRANSMITTAL NO. 16-46

Notice of Proposed Issuance of Letter of Offer Pursuant to Section 36(b)(1) of the Arms Export Control Act, as amended

(i) Prospective Purchaser: Government of Japan.

(ii) Total Estimated Value:
Major Defense Equipment* \$1.5 billion.
Other \$0.4 billion.
Total \$1.9 billion.

(iii) Description and Quantity or Quantities of Articles or Services under Consideration for Purchase: The Government of Japan requested the sale of four (4) KC-46 aerial refueling aircraft. Each aircraft is powered by two (2) Pratt & Whitney Model 4062 (PW4062) Turbofan engines. The sale includes one (1) additional spare PW4062 engine. Each aircraft will be delivered with Global Positioning Satellite (GPS) capability and defensive systems installed plus spares, to include: Raytheon's ALR-69A Radar Warning Receiver (RWR), Raytheon's Miniaturized Airborne GPS Receiver 2000 (MAGR 2K) to provide GPS Selective Availability Anti-Spoofing Module (SAASM) capability, and Northrop Grumman's AN/AAQ-24(V) Large Aircraft Infrared Countermeasures (LAIRCM) Nemesis (N) system. Each LAIRCM system consists of the following components: three (3) Guardian Laser Terminal Assemblies (GLTA), six (6) Ultra-Violet Missile Warning System (UVMWS) Sensors AN/AAR-54, one (1) LAIRCM System Processor Replacements (LSPR), one (1) Control Indicator Unit Replacement, one (1) Smart Card Assembly, and one (1) High Capacity Card.

Major Defense Equipment (MDE):

Four (4) KC-46 Aircraft including one (1) spare PW4062 turbofan engine.

Twelve (12) MAGR 2K-GPS SAASM Receivers.

Five (5) AN/ALR-69A RWR Systems.

Sixteen (16) GLTA AN/AAQ-24 (V)N; includes four (4) spares.

Thirty-six (36) UVMWS AN/AAR-54; includes twelve (12) spares.

Eight (8) LSPR AN/AAQ-24(V)N; includes four (4) spares.

Non-MDE: Twelve (12) AN/ARC-210 U/VHF Radios, six (6) APX-119 Identification Friend

or Foe (IFF) transponders, initial spares and repair parts, consumables, support equipment, technical data, engineering change proposals, publications, Field Service Representatives, repair and return, depot maintenance, training and training equipment, contractor technical and logistics personnel services, U.S. Government and contractor representative support, Group A and B installation for subsystems flight test and certification, and other related elements of logistics support. The total program cost is estimated at \$1.9 billion.

(iv) Military Department: Air Force (X7-D-SAJ).

(v) Prior Related Cases, if any: None.

(vi) Sales Commission, Fee, etc.: Paid. Offered, or Agreed to be Paid: None.

(vii) Sensitivity of Technology Contained in the Defense Article or Defense Services Proposed to be Sold: See Annex attached.

(viii) Date Report Delivered to Congress: September 21, 2016.

*As defined in Section 47(6) of the Arms Export Control Act.

POLICY JUSTIFICATION

Government of Japan—KC-46A Aerial Refueling Aircraft

The Government of Japan requested the sale of four (4) KC-46 aerial refueling aircraft. Each aircraft is powered by two (2) Pratt & Whitney Model 4062 (PW4062) Turbofan engines. The sale includes one (1) additional spare PW4062 engine. Each aircraft will be delivered with GPS capability and defensive systems installed plus spares, to include: Raytheon's ALR-69A Radar Warning Receiver (RWR), Raytheon's Miniaturized Airborne GPS Receiver (MAGR) 2000 (2K) to provide GPS Selective Availability Anti-Spoofing Module SAASM capability, and Northrop Grumman's AN/AAQ-24(V) Large Aircraft Infrared Countermeasures (LAIRCM) system. Each LAIRCM system consists of the following components: three (3) Guardian Laser Terminal Assemblies (GLTA), six (6) Ultra-Violet Missile Warning System (UVMWS) Sensors AN/AAR-54, one (1) LAIRCM System Processor Replacements (LSPR), one (1) Control Indicator Unit Replacement, one (1) Smart Card Assembly, and one (1) High Capacity Card.

The Major Defense Equipment (MDE) items are the aircraft and engines, MAGR 2K with SAASM, ALR-69A RWR, GLTA, UVMWS, and LSPR. The total MDE cost, with spares, is estimated at \$1.5 billion.

The following non-MDE items will be included with the purchase of the four (4) x KC-46A airframes: twelve (16) AN/ARC-210 UHF Radios, six (12) APX-119 Identification Friend or Foe (IFF) transponders, initial spares and repair parts, consumables, support equipment, technical data, engineering change proposals, publications, Field Service Representatives' (FSRs), repair and return, depot maintenance, training and training equipment, contractor technical and logistics personnel services, U.S. Government and contractor representative support, Group A and B installation for subsystems, flight test and certification, and other related elements of logistics support. The total program cost is estimated to be \$1.9 billion (includes all MDE and non-MDE values and above and below the line charges).

This proposed sale contributes to the foreign policy goals and national security objectives of the United States by meeting the legitimate security and defense needs of an ally and partner nation. Japan continues to be an important force for peace, political stability, and economic progress in the Asia-Pacific region.

The proposed sale increases Japan's capability to participate in Pacific region security operations and improves Japan's na-

tional security posture as a key U.S. ally. This proposed sale will provide Japan a needed capability to a close ally and support U.S. security interests in the region.

The proposed sale of this equipment and support does not affect the basic military balance in the region.

The principal contractors on the sale are Boeing Corporation as the aircraft manufacturer, supported by Raytheon Company, Waltham, MA, as the manufacturer of ALR-69A and the MAGR 2K. Northrop Grumman Corporation, Rolling Meadows, IL, will also support the sale as producer of the AN/AAQ-24(V)N LAIRCM system. Final assembly and delivery of the KC-46A takes place at Boeing's production facility in Everett, Washington. At this time, there are no known offset agreements proposed in connection with this potential sale.

Japan will have no difficulty absorbing these aircraft into its armed forces.

There is no adverse impact on U.S. defense readiness as a result of this proposed sale.

TRANSMITTAL NO. 16-46

Notice of Proposed Issuance of Letter of Offer Pursuant to Section 36(b)(1) of the Arms Export Control Act

Annex Item No. vii

(vii) Sensitivity of Technology:

1. The AN/AAQ-24(V)N Large Aircraft Infrared Countermeasures (LAIRCM) is a self-contained, directed energy countermeasures system designed to protect aircraft from infrared-guided surface-to-air missiles. The system features digital technology and micro-miniature solid-state electronics. The system operates in all conditions, detecting incoming missiles and jamming infrared-seeker equipped missiles with aimed bursts of laser energy. The LAIRCM system consists of multiple Ultra-Violet Missile Warning System (UVMWS) Sensor units, Guardian Laser Transmitter Assemblies (GLTA), LAIRCM System Processor Replacement (LSPR), Control Indicator Unit Replacement (CIUR), and a classified High Capacity Card (HCC), and User Data Modules (UDMs). The HCC is loaded into the CIUR prior to flight. When the classified HCC is not in use, it is removed from the CIUR and placed in on-board secure storage. LAIRCM Line Replicable Unit (LRU) hardware is classified SECRET when the HCC is inserted into the CIUR. LAIRCM system software, including Operational Flight Program is classified SECRET. Technical data and documentation to be provided are UNCLASSIFIED.

2. The set of UVMWS Sensor units (AN/AAR-54) are mounted on the aircraft exterior to provide omni-directional protection. The UVMWS Sensors detect the rocket plume of missiles and send appropriate data signals to the LSPR for processing. The LSPR analyzes the data from each UVMWS Sensor and automatically deploys the appropriate countermeasure via the GLTA. The CIUR displays the incoming threat.

a. The AN/AAR-54 is a small, lightweight, passive, electro-optic, threat warning device used to detect surface-to-air missiles fired at helicopters and low-flying fixed-wing aircraft and automatically provide countermeasures, as well as audio and visual warning messages to the aircrew. The basic system consists of multiple UVMWS Sensor units, three GLTAs, a LSPR, and a CIUR. The set of UVMWS units (each KC-46 has six (6)) are mounted on the aircraft exterior to provide omni-directional protection. Hardware is UNCLASSIFIED. Software is SECRET. Technical data and documentation to be provided are UNCLASSIFIED.

3. The AN/ALR-69A Digital Radar Warning Receiver (RWR) is the latest in RWR technology, designed to detect incoming radar signals, identify and characterize those sig-

nals to a specific threat, and alert the aircrew through the RWR System display. The system consists of external antennae mounted on the fuselage and wingtips. The ALR-69A is based on a digitally-controlled broadband receiver that scans within a specific frequency spectrum and is capable of adjusting to threat changes by modifications to the software. In Country Reprogramming RWR capability will not be provided as part of this export. Hardware is UNCLASSIFIED. Software is SECRET. Technical data and documentation to be provided are SECRET.

4. Miniature Airborne Global Positioning System Receiver 2000 (MAGR 2K) with Selective Availability Anti-Spoofing Module (SAASM). The MAGR 2K design is a GPS Receiver Applications Module based open system architecture that is modular in design and incorporates modem electronics. The MAGR 2K is a form, fit, and function backward compatible replacement of the MAGR, and provides enhancements including improved acquisition and GPS solution performance, all-in-view GPS satellite tracking and GPS integrity monitoring.

5. If a technologically advanced adversary were to obtain knowledge of the specific hardware and software elements, the information could be used to develop countermeasures or equivalent systems which might reduce system effectiveness or be used in the development of a system with similar or advanced capabilities.

6. This sale is necessary in furtherance of the U.S. foreign policy and national security objectives outlined in the Policy justification. Moreover, the benefits to be derived from this sale, as outlined in the Policy Justification, outweigh the potential damage that could result if the sensitive technology were revealed to unauthorized persons.

7. All defense articles and services listed in this transmittal are authorized for release and export by the U.S. Government to the Government of Japan.

25TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE INDEPENDENCE OF ARMENIA

Mr. MARKEY. Mr. President, today we recognize the 25th anniversary of Armenia's independence. On this day each year, we come together to celebrate the strength and indomitable spirit of the Armenian people.

For the last 25 years, Armenia has been a key friend and trusted ally of the United States. It is an alliance between our two nations that will only continue to deepen in the years ahead.

Armenia has come a long way to free itself from terror and tyranny—from the Soviet Union and from the horrors of genocide. This journey continues today, with our shared responsibility to ensure that the Armenian people are able to build their own independent and prosperous future. It is our duty to continue to stand with Armenia and with all Armenian people around the globe as they continue this fight.

We must keep pushing for truth and never allow the forces of denial to succeed in suppressing our collective memory. We have a responsibility to ensure that the evil that was perpetrated upon the Armenian people is never concealed nor denied. We must heed the words of Pope Francis that it is our duty to continue to honor the memory of those Armenians who perished in the Armenian genocide.

I am proud to stand with my colleagues in the Senate to commemorate Armenia's independence and continue to support the Armenian people.

200TH EDITION OF THE FARMERS' ALMANAC

Ms. COLLINS. Mr. President, since the first edition in 1818, the Farmers' Almanac has become an American institution, an informative and entertaining mix of weather, agriculture, humor, and common sense. With the 2017 issue now in print, it is a pleasure to recognize the 200th edition of this venerable publication and to celebrate Maine's remarkable Geiger family that makes it possible.

For its first 137 years, the Farmers' Almanac was published in Morristown, NJ. In 1955, Ray Geiger, who became the almanac's sixth editor in 1934, moved operations to Lewiston, ME, believing—quite correctly—that my State's New England heritage better reflected the publication's guiding ethic of sustainable, simple living.

Ray Geiger led the Farmers' Almanac for 60 years, its longest serving editor. Upon his passing in 1994, his son Peter took the reins after 15 years as associate editor. That same year, Sandi Duncan was named managing editor, the first woman almanac editor in American history.

Under this leadership team, circulation has grown from 86,000 in the 1930s to more than 4 million today. In addition, the almanac's timeless qualities have stepped into the age of technology with an engaging, interactive website and a Facebook page with more than 1 million followers.

Readers enjoy the Farmers' Almanac for its humorous essays, trivia, and advice on everything from gardening to relationships, but the long-range weather forecasts remain its hallmark. The time-tested, highly secret mathematical and astronomical formula produces 16-month forecasts for seven different U.S. climate zones with a significant record of accuracy. In fact, the CEO of a major airline recently confirmed that Farmers' Almanac forecasts are factored into his company's winter contingency planning.

From the first edition to today, Farmers' Almanac editors have worn the honorary title of Philomath—for Philomath, a lover of learning. That is an apt title for readers as well as editors, as every edition of the almanac is a mini-encyclopedia of American history, natural science, and a host of other disciplines.

It is a particularly apt title for Peter Geiger, a great champion of education who founded the Adopt-A-School movement in Maine in 1988 and who launched a successful program with Maine elementary and middle schools to encourage and develop young writers. His company provides college scholarships to Maine students, and Peter serves as a member and former chairman of our State's board of edu-

cation. In 1991, he was named the 618th of President George H. W. Bush's 1,000 Points of Light.

The Geiger family and their company advance the Maine business tradition of service to others by supporting a wide range of civic and charitable endeavors, from the arts to health care to homeless youth. The New Beginnings Ann Geiger Center in Lewiston, ME, named in honor of Peter's mother, provides vital education and skills-development opportunities for homeless and neglected youth. Ray Geiger Elementary School in that same city recognizes the family's many contributions.

The special 200th edition of the Farmers' Almanac includes a celebratory section of vintage articles that take readers through nearly two centuries of American lore, from how to quiet a fussy baby with molasses and feathers to the art of kissing and maintaining household tranquility. Just as important, it stands as proof that hard work, an entrepreneurial spirit, and a commitment to giving back are the key ingredients of success. I congratulate the Geiger family and the Farmers' Almanac for this milestone achievement and wish them all the best in the years to come.

TRIBUTE TO DR. SUSAN S. KELLY

Mr. ISAKSON. Mr. President, today I wish to pay special tribute to an exceptional Federal civil servant of the United States of America, Dr. Susan S. Kelly, the director of the Transition to Veterans Program Office, Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness. Dr. Kelly is retiring from the Federal Government on September 30, 2016, after 33 years of distinguished service to our Nation. Many of us on Capitol Hill have enjoyed the opportunity to work with Dr. Kelly on a wide variety of defense issues and programs, and it is my privilege and honor to recognize her many accomplishments.

Dr. Kelly has an extensive history of helping organizations successfully transform, and I want to focus on her exceptional work since she took over as the director of the Transition to Veterans Program Office in June 2012. She has been instrumental in the ambitious effort to revitalize the Department of Defense Transition Assistance Program, which ensures that servicemembers transitioning to civilian life are provided with the information and training needed to effectively pursue their civilian career goals. In implementing the sweeping redesign of the Transition Assistance Program, she has helped the military move away from viewing transition as an end-of-career activity, instead making postmilitary preparation a careerlong process that servicemembers plan for throughout their military life cycle. She has also helped to transform the Department's views on transition, emphasized the essential skills that make the all-volunteer force an attractive

pathway to employment, and strengthened a talent pipeline that returns career-ready servicemembers to communities across America. It was the first redesign and comprehensive review of the Transition Assistance Program in the 20-plus years since it became law.

At every turn, Dr. Kelly sought to ensure that the Transition Assistance Program is not only effective but also efficient. Dr. Kelly implemented a stronger oversight of program budgetary processes and sought to use smarter, more efficient processes in redesigning the Transition Assistance Program. Dr. Kelly has also led several changes to prevent unnecessary redundancy within the Department, including relying on existing assets for certified financial planners, educational counselors, and resiliency trainers. In addition to eliminating redundancies, this has fostered collaboration with other Department of Defense agencies and, for this work, was recognized in 2015 as a finalist in the management excellence category for the Samuel J. Heyman Service to America Medal, which honors stars of the Federal Government's workforce.

Dr. Kelly's work on behalf of the Transition to Veterans Program Office, the Department of Defense, and, most importantly, our Nation's servicemembers demonstrates her dedication to the cause of changing the culture within the Department to better help our Nation's veterans succeed. With Dr. Kelly's guidance, this dramatic and sweeping transformation of the Transition Assistance Program has been implemented throughout the Department of Defense, enabling the Department to ensure that today's veterans are better equipped than ever to handle an ever-changing labor market every bit as well as they were able to handle the ever-changing challenges of the battlefield.

As Dr. Kelly concludes her 33-year career as a public servant and leader in a highly demanding department, she is to be recognized this day as a most distinguished American for her exemplary leadership, commitment, managerial talent, and vision.

On behalf of the Congress and the United States of America, I thank Dr. Susan S. Kelly and her entire family for the commitment, sacrifices, and contributions they have made throughout her honorable service. Congratulations on completing an outstanding and successful career.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

REMEMBERING BRIAN SCOTT GAMROTH

• Mr. BARRASSO. Mr. President, Wyoming has lost a true giant. On September 18, 2016, Brian Scott Gamroth lost his life in a tragic motorcycle accident. It is hard to think of a more familiar and friendly voice in Wyoming than Brian Scott's. For the past 23

years, the Casper community woke up and went to work with the smiling voice of Brian Scott filling the airwaves on the K2 Morning Show. While his voice has been silenced, his impact on Wyoming will live on.

Brian didn't stop at just reporting about the community, he lived it and loved it every day. If there was a charitable event in Casper or anywhere in Wyoming, Brian was either emceeding it or letting everyone in the Cowboy State know how they can help. Through his talents as an entertainer, master of ceremonies, and a community leader, Brian has raised millions of dollars for local and State charities.

Brian's love for Wyoming was only eclipsed by his love for his family. He is survived by his wife, Tracy, and three sons: Josh and his wife, Heidi; Kyle and his wife, Whitney; and Corey. Brian cherished his four grandchildren, Lucy, Sarah, Reagan, and Owen.

Brian Scott Gamroth was a friend to everyone. He has changed many lives for the better, and Wyoming will feel his loss for a long time. Bobbi and I are blessed to have called him our friend. We will miss him dearly.●

TRIBUTE TO TOM PAYNE

● Mr. BLUNT. Mr. President, earlier this year, I got the news that my good friend, Dean Tom Payne, had announced that he would be retiring from the MU College of Agriculture, Food, and Natural Resources and vice chancellor for Agriculture. Needless to say, I had mixed emotions.

I am happy that Tom will get to spend more time with his beautiful wife, Alice, and his children, Joanna and Jacob, and Jacob's wife, Jennifer. Of course, I am also happy that Caroline and Jack, his grandchildren, will get to see him more.

However, his retirement also made me think that someone will have big shoes to fill because Dean Payne has set high standards throughout the years and exceeded them.

Dean Thomas L. Payne has served as vice chancellor for Agriculture and dean of the MU College of Agriculture, Food, and Natural Resources since January 1, 1999. Back then he knew that the College of Agriculture at the University of Missouri in Columbia was a leader in agriculture research and education. Today under Dean Payne's leadership, the MU College of Agriculture is at the forefront.

Dean Payne was born in Bakersfield, CA. He received his B.A. in zoology from the University of California, Santa Barbara, and his M.S. in entomology and Ph.D. in entomology and physiological psychology from the University of California, Riverside.

Payne took his talents to Texas A&M University's departments of entomology and forest science. He started his track record in leadership, academics, and research.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture selected him to serve as the research

coordinator for the Southern Pine Beetle Program.

He became a professor and head of entomology at Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University.

In the midnineties, Tom was appointed as associate vice president for agricultural administration and associate dean for research at the Ohio State University's College of Food, Agriculture, and Environmental Sciences. He was also the director of the Ohio Agricultural Research and Development Center.

He then moved to the University of Missouri, Columbia and further solidified his leadership in research and academics. In addition to serving as vice chancellor and dean of the MU College of Agriculture, Food, and Natural Resources, he also became the director of the Missouri Agricultural Experiment Station. The Missouri Agricultural Experiment Station is a network of centers conducting research in agriculture, animal science, natural resources, and forestry.

Of course, Dean Payne is an over-achiever. He is the author and co-author of more than 130 publications and is founding coeditor of the *Journal of Insect Behavior*. He is a recipient of numerous awards including the Alexander von Humboldt Prize and Missouri Future Farmers of America Association Distinguished Service Award. If all that wasn't enough, Dean Payne has been a member of the World Agricultural Forum's Board of Advisors, Danforth Plant Sciences Center's Board of Advisors, Agriculture Future of America's Board of Directors, and a board member of the Entomological Foundation.

There are few people who are able to figure out what they love to do and make such a successful career out of doing just that. However, Dean Tom Payne is one such person who has had a career doing what he loves, but in addition, have a tremendous impact on students, peers, and all those that know him.

Dean Payne has had a career preparing, showing, teaching, and leading students and faculty. I am confident that there are many individuals who would credit Dean Payne for their interest in agriculture, especially agriculture research. He has always had a passion for what he does—and not matter what, he always has his wit and humor.

I have seen his wit and humor bring tears and laughter. I have also seen individuals nervous as they waited to hear Dean Payne speak, wondering what zingers he might say. I can promise you, he knows how to hold his audience's attention—students or career professionals.

My friend, Dean Tom Payne, has always provided insight and leadership at each institution he worked, committee seat he held, and board on which he served. I know that at the College of Agriculture, Food, and Natural Resources, at the University of Missouri

in Columbia, Dean Payne has left his mark on the student population, research programs, and faculty members. Student enrollment in the college increased by 44 percent. Student participation in study abroad programs increased 50 percent. He contributed to making the Bond Life Sciences Center a reality. Plant and animal sciences continued to enhance its programmatic strength, so it is now ranked among the 15 best programs in the world. And he oversaw the hiring of more than half of the college's current faculty.

Again I say, Dean Payne has left big shoes to fill.

In his retirement, I am confident Dean Payne will play more golf, but I am not certain it will improve his game. He might even do some more hunting and fishing. I hope he will continue to be a resource for those in agriculture, especially agriculture research and education.

Missourians wish Dean Tom Payne all the best in his retirement.●

REMEMBERING DALE FREEMAN

● Mr. BOOZMAN. Mr. President, today I wish to honor the life of Lawrence County Judge Dale Freeman of Portia, AR, who passed away on Saturday, September 17, 2016.

Judge Freeman was a Lawrence County native who loved his neighbors and community with evident passion. Dale graduated from Southern Baptist College and worked at Burlington Northern Railroad, where he retired after 36 years of service. He also had a desire for public service and went on to become mayor of Portia, AR, and eventually was elected judge of Lawrence County in 2010.

Judge Freeman once told a reporter, "the only job I ever wanted was to be the judge in Lawrence County." When the people of Lawrence County gave him that opportunity, he made the most of it. He was a tireless advocate for citizens and was known to put in long hours conducting the business of the county. His ultimate goal was to leave the county better than when he took office, and based on the results, it is fair to say that he achieved that aim.

Judge Freeman was injured in a car accident in August of this year and was being treated at a hospital in Little Rock. While he had been making progress toward a recovery, unfortunately, his health rapidly declined, and he passed away as a result of his injuries. He is survived by his wife, Mary, daughters, Tonya, Candi, and Michelle, and son, Jeff.

I deeply admire Judge Freeman's dedication to serving his lifelong home of Lawrence County. I know his leadership, dedication, and commitment to the community will be missed by many. I join with them in praying for comfort for Judge Freeman's family, friends, and loved ones. Today we honor him as his community grieves his loss and reflects on his life and service.●

AMALGAMATED SUGAR'S CENTURY OF IDAHO SUGAR PRODUCTION

• Mr. CRAPO. Mr. President, my colleague Senator JIM RISCH joins me today in recognizing Amalgamated Sugar's 100 years of sugar production in the Magic Valley of Idaho.

With roots that stretch back to 1897, Amalgamated Sugar, a grower-owned cooperative, has been a member of the Magic Valley community for 100 years. Amalgamated Sugar opened its Twin Falls factory on October 22, 1916, followed a year later by the Paul factory on October 28, 1917. Throughout the years, Amalgamated Sugar's growers and employees have navigated the twists and turns of a more than challenging market with sensibility, determination, and innovation. Through its partnership with Amalgamated Research, Inc., ARi, a research and development company owned by Amalgamated Sugar, Amalgamated Sugar has pioneered the use of innovative fractal separation technology and is a leader in processing efficiency. Amalgamated Sugar has also expanded its marketing to reach throughout the United States through its partnership with National Sugar Marketing. The past 100 years of innovation have helped Amalgamated Sugar grow from processing 3,078,000 tons of sugarbeets into 925,000 100-pound bags of sugar in 1917, to the estimated 6,636,000 tons of sugarbeets into 21,058,000 100-pound bags in 2016.

The cooperative's focus on precision production and agronomic advancements has grown it into the second largest beet sugar producer in the U.S., producing 12 percent of the Nation's sugar on 182,000 acres, according to statistics from Amalgamated Sugar. The cooperative's accomplishments result from the teamwork of its approximately 750 growers and more than 1,600 Idaho employees who produce quality sugarbeets, transport them from the fields to the factories, and refine high-quality sugar products, nutritional supplements, and animal-feed products. Amalgamated Sugar is a substantial part of our Nation's economy.

Amalgamated Sugar's contributions include approximately \$800 million in revenues to Idaho's economy, which is evident in the lives of the generations of its growers and employees, in its relationships with local suppliers and vendors, and in the more than \$283 million in Idaho's sugarbeet production estimated by the Idaho State Department of Agriculture.

Congratulations, Amalgamated Sugar growers and employees, on a century of accomplishments. You and your predecessors have much to be proud of for prevailing over more than a 100 years of challenges and contributing significantly to job opportunities and U.S. production. We wish you all the best for continued success.●

TRIBUTE TO CYNTHIA "CINDY" HUBERT

• Mr. DONNELLY. Mr. President, today I wish to recognize and honor the extraordinary service of Cynthia "Cindy" Hubert, a dedicated Hoosier, who has played a critical role in feeding the hungry in Indiana.

On September 24, 2016, Cindy will retire following more than 6 years of service to Gleaners Food Bank of Indiana.

Indiana has benefitted greatly from Cindy's tireless leadership, and she has helped oversee and successfully lead several hunger relief organizations in central Indiana at critical time periods in each organization's history. Her efforts have ensured hundreds of thousands of food-insecure Hoosiers are fed with dignity and hope, giving these families the chance to lead happier, healthier, and more fulfilling lives.

Cindy moved to Indianapolis, IN, after a successful 25-year career with First Union National Bank in Connecticut. After arriving in Indiana, Cindy first led Horizon House, a multi-service center for the homeless. She then went on to lead three of the most critical and impactful organizations in Indiana that feed hungry children, senior citizens, military veterans, and families.

Prior to her transformational leadership at Gleaners, Cindy was president and CEO of Second Helpings, Inc., a leading provider of meals to more than 80 nonprofits in central Indiana. Cindy oversaw one of Second Helpings' most significant periods of change and growth, and it celebrated its 10 millionth meal distributed this July.

During her time at Second Helpings, Cindy also launched a collaborative program known as the Indy Hunger Network, where key nonprofit, government, donor, and support organizations leverage their unique abilities, combine resources, and talent and impact hunger together. Cindy's idea has grown into a highly effective reality and a key part of the hunger relief network in central Indiana.

In her role as president and CEO of Gleaners, she has supported one-third of Indiana's food-insecure population across 21 counties, working through hundreds of local agencies. During her 6 years at Gleaners, three core programs have tripled in size: Backsacks for Kids, the School Pantry Program, and the Mobile Pantry Program. Cindy helped Gleaners launch important new programs, including summer meals for children in need and a new initiative feeding senior citizens. She also opened an on-site food pantry at the Gleaners distribution center and, over time, worked to increase the food pantry physical's size to six times the original space. Under her leadership, 75 Gleaners employees and tens of thousands of volunteers each year distribute 27.5 million meals; 10,400 backsacks to children for weekends; 135,000 summer meals at 54 sites; more than 328,000 meals to senior citizens; over 2.4 mil-

lion meals to 150,000 hungry Hoosiers at 321 mobile pantry sites; and nearly 1 million meals at 50 school-based pantry sites.

Cindy's integrity and tireless efforts have helped to make Indiana a better place to live, work, and raise a family. We are incredibly grateful for Cindy's leadership and service, and we wish her well in retirement with her husband, Steve, and daughter Stacey.●

REMEMBERING EWING MARION KAUFFMAN

• Mrs. MCCASKILL. Mr. President, I ask the Senate to join me today in honoring the 100th birthday celebration of Ewing Kauffman. Mr. Kauffman was a Kansas City and Missouri icon who lived a life that would make all Americans proud. From founding a pharmaceutical empire, to bringing Major League Baseball back to Kansas City, to establishing a philanthropic foundation that continues to change lives to this day, Mr. Kauffman built a legacy that is deserving of all of our respect.

On June 1, 1950, Mr. Kauffman opened Marion Laboratories. "Mr. K" operated this company from the basement of his home and used his middle name as the company name so that people wouldn't know they were dealing with a small, one-man operation. As he built this humble company into an industry leader, he did so with two guiding philosophies: No. 1, share the rewards with those who produce, and No. 2, treat others the way you wish to be treated. Profit sharing wasn't an industry practice at the time, but it was vital to the company's success and an example of Mr. Kauffman's generosity. By the time the company was sold in 1989, it had provided jobs for 3,400 associates, showed a \$227 million profit, and made 300 Marion Labs associates instant millionaires.

In 1968 Mr. Kauffman said, "Kansas City has been good to me, and I want to show I can return the favor." It was that year that he and Kansas City were awarded a Major League Baseball expansion franchise—the Kansas City Royals were born. However, having a team was not enough for Mr. K; the team needed to win and win a lot. During his time as owner, the Royals won six division titles, two American League pennants, and the 1985 World Series Championship; yet even that was not enough for him to "return the favor" to Kansas City. Mr. Kauffman, worried that a new owner would move the franchise out of Kansas City upon his death, set up an imaginative strategy to ensure that didn't happen. Namely, the profit of the sale by a new owner would have to go to local Kansas City charities, essentially ensuring the franchise would stay in Kansas City. Because of this forward thinking, I am sure Mr. K was smiling down as approximately 800,000 Kansas Citians celebrated at the Royals 2015 World Series Championship Parade.

Even with all that he did during his life, his most lasting legacy will be establishing the foundation that bears his name and continues to effect change to this day: the Kauffman Foundation. Mr. Kauffman regarded his education and ability to be an entrepreneur to be pivotal in his life. For that reason, the Kauffman Foundation focuses its grant making on those two areas, giving people the resources needed to be self-sufficient and make positive change in their community.

Reflecting on his philanthropy, Mr. Kauffman said, "All the money in the world cannot solve problems unless we work together. And, if we work together, there is no problem in the world that can stop us, as we seek to develop people to their highest and best potential." Words that are as true today as they were during his life.

Mr. President, I ask that the Senate join me in honoring the 100th birthday celebration and the life and achievements of one of Kansas City and the State of Missouri's finest citizens, Ewing Marion Kauffman.●

● Mr. BLUNT. Mr. President, over the last several years, when Missourians and people across the country open their newspapers or watch the news, they are bombarded with reports that make them feel anxious about the direction of our Nation and the future our children and grandchildren will inherit.

At times like these, when we are filled with anxiety and uncertainty, it is important to remind ourselves of the good done by great Americans in their communities. One man or woman can make a tangible difference to improve the lives of many.

Today I want to recognize one such a great American, as well as Missouri native, Ewing Marion Kauffman, on the 100th anniversary of his birth.

Residents of Kansas City knew and still know Ewing Marion Kauffman well. They are reminded of his lasting legacy every time they see the work of the Kauffman Foundation or when they visit Kauffman Stadium—"The K"—to see the Kansas City Royals.

However, Mr. Kauffman is perhaps best known for his vision that a quality education is the foundation for self-sufficiency, and he used philanthropy to help foster a society of economically independent individuals who are actively engaged in their communities. Indeed, Mr. Kauffman's vision has left an indelible mark on the lives of so many.

By way of background, Ewing Marion Kauffman was born on September 21, 1916, on a farm in Garden City, MO. The son of John and Effie May, the Kauffman family moved to Kansas City when Ewing was just a boy—a place he called home the rest of his life.

Ewing Kauffman was from the generation that weathered the Great Depression. As a boy, he helped his family make ends meet by selling eggs and magazines door to door, even diving into muddy underwater burrows to catch catfish so he could sell them.

During World War II, he served his country in defense of freedom by joining the U.S. Navy. When the war ended, Ewing Kauffman became a salesman for a pharmaceutical company. A born salesman, by the end of his second year, he is said to have earned more in commissions alone than the salary of the president of the company he worked for.

In 1950, Mr. Kauffman struck out and started his own pharmaceutical company: Marion Laboratories.

A few things to note about Marion Laboratories. First, there was no lab. Ewing Kauffman founded this startup in his basement. Second, in a field that requires huge amounts of capital in scientific research, Mr. Kauffman's "research division" consisted of him reading medical journals. As one biographer noted: "He was in a business that was rooted in science and fueled by research, and he had only a smattering of the former and could not afford the latter."

What Mr. Kauffman had in spades, however, was an innate understanding of marketing and an ability to sell a product.

Why call his new startup "Marion Laboratories?"

He used his middle name to suggest that it wasn't a one-man operation.

How good a salesman was he?

In its first year, Marion Labs made \$36,000 in sales. By the time he sold the company in 1989, it made \$1 billion in sales and employed over 3,400 people.

Ewing Kauffman's philosophy in life can be summed up in three basic principles he adhered to:

First, treat others as you want to be treated.

Second, share life's rewards with those who make them possible.

Third, give back to society.

Actions speak louder than words, and it is easy to find examples of Mr. Kauffman's actions that support the principles by which he lived.

A popular boss who treated all his employees with dignity and respect, his employees affectionately took to simply calling him Mr. K. In terms of sharing life's rewards, he offered his employees a profit-sharing plan, stock options, and education benefits. By 1968, 20 of Marion's employees had become millionaires—and reportedly, hundreds had become millionaires by 1989.

But what really makes Ewing Kauffman stand out was his commitment to his third principle: Giving back to society.

There is not enough time to recount all of the work Mr. K did for Kansas City. He was passionate about improving lives and helping to make Kansas City a better place to live and work. I want to take a moment to highlight just a few of his contributions.

First, in 1968, he brought Major League Baseball back to Kansas City. The unique thing about this is that he acquired the team for the benefit of the city. The Kansas City Royals provided the community with a sense of pride,

solidarity, and identity. This is all the more true given the Royals' success—they have won six American League West titles, two pennants, participated in four World Series, and won two World Series championships in 1985 and 2015.

Second, in 1966, he founded the Ewing Marion Kauffman Foundation, a philanthropic organization committed to helping people through education and entrepreneurship and changing the trajectory of their lives.

Always cognizant of the need to create more and better paying jobs, Kauffman saw education and entrepreneurship as two ends of a continuum. As such, he directed the foundation's mission to be one that helps individuals attain economic independence by advancing educational achievement and entrepreneurial success.

Today the Kauffman Foundation is among the largest private foundations in the U.S., with an asset base of approximately \$2 billion, and it sponsors dozens of fundraisers every year to support other nonprofits, funding organizations that accelerate positive change where it is needed most.

Lastly, I want to highlight something really unique. In 1988, Mr. Kauffman went to Kansas City Westport High School—the school he graduated from in 1934—to launch Project Choice.

By the late 1980s, Westport High School was plagued with a 30-percent dropout rate, and the disadvantaged students who attended had to contend with the scourge of serious drug and alcohol abuse. Project Choice was a deal Mr. K struck with 250 eighth graders who were about to attend Westport High School.

Ewing Kauffman offered the students—with the involvement of their parents—a 4-year scholarship to the college, university, or vocational school of their choice, including costs of tuition, books, fees, and room and board. What was the catch you might ask? Each child must graduate from high school in 4 years, have regular attendance, no serious disciplinary problems, and abstain from drugs and alcohol. Additionally, their parents had to agree to meet regularly with their children's teachers, coaches, and counselors and participate in school activities.

When asked why he was taking this initiative, Mr. K responded: "We have racial discrimination now. We have economic discrimination now . . . the answer to social and economic injustice is education."

He later expanded Project Choice to other schools across the Kansas City area.

In 2001, after learning from both successes and challenges with Project Choice, the Kauffman Foundation updated the program to emphasize college access, college preparation, and college graduation as part of its Kauffman Scholars Program.

In short, through its many programs, initiatives, and grants, the Kauffman

Foundation embodies Mr. K's principles. Through its research and programs, the foundation continues to work to increase the percentage of students who achieve successful academic and life outcomes—to create the self-reliant human capital necessary for entrepreneurial success.

Ewing Kauffman saw himself as a common man who did uncommon things. He constantly challenged those around him to reach their full potential and improve the lives of their families and communities. He built a lasting legacy in Kansas City.

Each one of us is capable of doing the same if we live by his principles: to treat others as you would like to be treated, to share life's rewards with those who make them possible, and to give back to society.

That philosophy is perhaps his greatest legacy, and it is a legacy this body should recognize because those principles—combined with a commitment to education and entrepreneurship—are what make good citizens great.●

● Mr. MORAN. Mr. President, today I wish to honor the 100th birthday of Ewing Marion Kauffman, an exceptionally successful Kansas City businessman who also cared deeply about the community he lived in.

Mr. Kauffman was an entrepreneur working out of the basement of his modest Kansas City home when he founded Marion Laboratories in June of 1950. By 1965, he had grown his small pharmaceutical business into a publicly traded company and introduced an innovative profit-sharing model so that all of his associates would reap the financial benefits of his company's accomplishments. His lifelong focus on enabling others to succeed has benefited generations of Kansans and all in the Kansas City community.

By 1989, Marion Laboratories merged with Merrell Dow to form Marion Merrell Dow, which provided jobs for 3,400 associates. Marion Merrell Dow became the fifth largest drug company in the United States in terms of sales. Leading Mr. Kauffman to this success were two guiding philosophic principles: No. 1, share the rewards with those who produce and No. 2, treat others as you wish to be treated. His principles continue to serve as a model of professional culture to new businesses across a wide variety of industries, and oftentimes, these new businesses are started by former associates of Mr. Kauffman's company and its affiliates.

Following Mr. Kauffman's success in business, he used his considerable resources to do good, establishing the Ewing Marion Kauffman Foundation in 1966. The foundation sought to address systemic issues within underserved communities around Kansas City—notably focused on improving the quality of education in the area and promoting and fostering entrepreneurship as a means of empowerment and opportunity for individuals.

Mr. Kauffman's legacy addressing fundamental challenges in the local

community through a research-based approach continues today through the innovative work of the Ewing Marion Kauffman Foundation. The foundation continues to focus on advancing education and entrepreneurship opportunities through strategic partnerships and inclusive dialogue among all pertinent private and public parties. In June, the foundation announced its 100 Acts of Generosity campaign to encourage the public to participate in community service efforts to honor Mr. Kauffman's legacy, while awarding a \$1 million grant to the Kansas City Royals' Urban Youth Academy to serve 800 to 1,000 young people with free baseball and softball clinics and instruction.

Mr. Kauffman also brought Major League Baseball back to his hometown, founding the Kansas City Royals in 1968. Under Kauffman's leadership, the organization sold more than 2 million tickets per season during 11 different seasons and won six division titles, two American League pennants, and the 1985 World Series Championship. Mr. Kauffman also developed innovative measures to ensure the Royals would remain in Kansas City long after his death in 1993.

In reflection of Mr. Kauffman's philanthropic mission, I conclude my remarks with a statement by Mr. Kauffman himself: "All of the money in the world cannot solve problems unless we work together. And, if we work together, there is no problem in the world that can stop us, as we seek to develop people to their highest and best potential."●

REMEMBERING DR. MOLLY MACAULEY

● Ms. MIKULSKI. Mr. President, I would like to take a moment to note the sad and untimely passing of a wonderful pillar of our Baltimore community, Dr. Molly Macauley. This is a very sad time not only for the Roland Park neighborhood of Baltimore where Dr. Macauley lived, but also for the Johns Hopkins community and Resources of the Future, where Dr. Macauley gave so much of her time and energy.

Molly Macauley was widely admired by her family, friends, and colleagues for her determination to impact the world. Originally from northern Virginia, she graduated from William and Mary in 1979 and came to Baltimore to study at Johns Hopkins University. She received her master's in 1981 and her doctoral degree in economics in 1983. Dr. Macauley was a visiting professor at Johns Hopkins for 20 years. She also joined the think tank "Resources for the Future," eventually becoming vice president for research. Dr. Macauley was considered an expert in environmental economics, leading the way into the future in space research and renewable energy. She also served on committees involved in science, space, and medicine, finding common ground and moving all of us forward.

We could use more role models like her everywhere today.

Dr. Macauley spent her time dedicated to becoming a better leader and raising those around her up as well. She put forth so much effort to make sure that the work she was doing had the greatest possible influence. She tried to bring good to this world through her award-winning journal articles, her time spent testifying in front of Congress, and educating the next generation of changemakers. Dr. Macauley will be remembered in Baltimore especially for the love she had for our city. She chose to commute to D.C. each day because she couldn't bear to leave Baltimore for too long. She never let anyone forget their ties to Baltimore either. Even if they moved away, she sent Baltimore's world-famous Berger cookies and treats to remind them of home.

Her passing has been a shock to our community, to have such an upstanding and valued member of it so brutally attacked. I know the community will be there for each other as we come to terms with her tragic loss. I ask that my colleagues join me in expressing sympathy to Dr. Macauley's family and friends as they mourn the loss of this remarkable woman and remember the impact she had on our Nation.●

REMEMBERING DR. RAYMOND C. BUSHLAND

● Mr. ROUNDS. Mr. President, today I wish to commemorate the life and work of Dr. Raymond C. Bushland, a native of South Dakota.

Dr. Bushland, along with his colleague Edward F. Knipling of Texas, made tremendous scientific advancements in eradicating and suppressing the threat posed by pests to the livestock and crops that contribute to the world's food supply. Dr. Bushland will be posthumously honored with the Golden Goose Award for his and Dr. Knipling's research on the screwworm fly. The Golden Goose Award recognizes scientists who have made significant contributions to society through unique federally funded projects.

Bushland was raised in Clearlake, SD, and graduated from South Dakota State University in 1932 with degrees in entomology and zoology. After earning his masters in 1934, he began working at a laboratory for the U.S. Department of Agriculture in Dallas, TX, where he met Dr. Knipling. The two shared a fascination with the screwworm fly, a rampant and aggressive pest that primarily targeted cattle. The screwworm fly could decimate herds in a matter of weeks and was nearly impossible to prevent.

Through their research, Bushland and Knipling hypothesized that scientists could combat the pest by controlling its population, an approach that was met with great skepticism. Regardless, Bushland successfully devised the "sterile insect technique," a revolutionary method in controlling

pest populations. The hypothesis was soon confirmed.

By preventing regular reproduction, they began seeing results immediately, and in 1982, the screwworm fly was declared completely eradicated in the U.S. Since this breakthrough, the U.S. Department of Agriculture has partnered with countries throughout the Western Hemisphere to continue eradicating screwworm flies and preventing reinfestation.

The technique pioneered by Bushland and Knippling saved the cattle industry an estimated \$20 billion since its implementation and has been applied to various insect species since. Today, scientists are using the same technique to combat the spread of the Zika virus. This feat is lauded as one of the most important developments in pest control, as well as one of the first peaceful uses of nuclear radiation.

Bushland's work represents a pinnacle of scientific achievement that helped pave a new era of food security and public health. His curiosity, perseverance, and ingenuity continue to be a source of inspiration for students in South Dakota and across the country. For his commitment to science, education, and society, we thank him.●

RECOGNIZING MORRIS & DICKSON CO. LLC

● Mr. VITTER. Mr. President, oftentimes the truest test of a small business's strength is its longevity. In Louisiana, our small businesses have worked through countless challenges and survived for generations to improve the lives of their neighbors and make substantial contributions to the economy. In honor of their 175th anniversary, I would like to present Morris & Dickson Co. LLC of Shreveport, LA, with the Senate Small Business Legacy Award for the important achievements of this Louisiana-based small business success story.

In 1841, John Worthington Morris opened J. W. Morris & Co., an independent pharmacy in downtown Shreveport, LA. Working out of a single riverfront warehouse, J.W. first received goods by steamboat from New Orleans and, with the help of his brother, Thomas Henry, ran his namesake small business until his death 12 years later. A second generation of the Morris family continued J.W.'s legacy until Claudius Dickson bought the business in 1899, renaming it to be Morris & Dickson Co. Claudius worked with members of the Morris family to grow their wholesale pharmaceutical business. As technology improved, with new railway lines and gasoline-powered trucks, Morris & Dickson Co. embraced the revolutionary improvements to distribute their pharmaceuticals in Louisiana and the surrounding States.

In order to survive the Civil War, the Great Depression, as well as the day-to-day struggles of running a successful business, the leaders of Morris & Dickson Co. took advantage of each

technological improvement to ensure the company would stay afloat.

It wasn't until the 1980s that Morris & Dickson Co. grew exponentially and became a nationally recognized competitor. At the time, Morris & Dickson Co. was working out of the same building it had first moved into in 1905. Nearly eight decades later, they were still transporting goods in a manual freight elevator and used a dumbwaiter or rope bucket to send orders upstairs. Claudius's son Markham Allen Dickson recognized that major changes had to be made and, much like his predecessors, had an immense respect for technology's growing influence. M. Allen's foresight and ingenuity allowed the family-owned business to grow to become the region's leading wholesale drug distributor. He moved the company out of downtown Shreveport and utilized the early use of computers. Under his leadership, Morris & Dickson Co. exploded on the national wholesale pharmaceutical scene. By 2013, Morris & Dickson Co. was the fourth largest pharmaceutical distributor in the Nation.

Still driven by the 175-year-old ambition to elevate the standard of patient care for their neighbors and community, today Morris & Dickson Co. is run by M. Allen's son, Paul Dickson. Morris & Dickson Co. has a well-earned reputation for persevering through many hardships by embracing innovation in order to harness the power of an ever-changing economy and increasingly technology-driven world.

Today, Morris & Dickson Co. provides operational and logistic innovation support for independent pharmacies. This includes everything from ontime delivery of pharmaceutical inventory to inventory management software. With Morris & Dickson Co.'s help, independent pharmacies in 14 States can focus on supporting and improving the health of their local communities, while also remaining financially solvent.

This Shreveport-based family-run business is a great example of the American Dream in action, and companies like Morris & Dickson certainly serve as role models for the next generation of entrepreneurs. I congratulate the hard-working folks at Morris & Dickson Co. LLC on 175 years in business and for the well-deserved honor of the Senate Small Business Legacy Award.●

TRIBUTE TO MISSISSIPPI'S OLYMPIANS AND PARALYMPIANS

● Mr. WICKER. Mr. President, today I wish to congratulate the Mississippians who competed in the Olympics and Paralympics in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. They have indeed made us proud.

One of our Olympic all-stars—Tori Bowie—came home with a complete set of medals, earning bronze, silver, and gold in track-and-field events. Tori is from Sandhill, a community in Rankin County, and attended the University of

Southern Mississippi. She earned her bronze medal in the 200-meter, her silver in the 100-meter, and her gold in the 4x100-meter relay.

Another track-and-field star, Sam Kendricks, also made news headlines for both his bronze medal in pole vault and a powerful moment of patriotism. During the qualifying round, the second lieutenant in the Army Reserve stopped sprinting during his pole vault attempt to stand at attention when he heard "the Star-Spangled Banner." Sam is from Oxford and attended the University of Mississippi.

Gulfport native Brittney Reese made history at the 2012 London games, where she became the first American woman to win a gold medal in long jump in more than 20 years. She did not leave Rio empty-handed. The six-time world champion and Ole Miss alumna earned a silver medal in her third Olympics.

Rounding out Mississippi's roster was Ricky Robertson of Hernando, a former track-and-field star at the University of Mississippi who competed in high jump at his first Olympics.

For 10 other athletes, the road to Rio went through Mississippi. These talented individuals have made our State home as alumni, students, or coaches at our universities. Congratulations are in order for Gwen Berry, Mateo Edwards, Marta Freitas, Antwon Hicks, Anaso Jobodwana, Mariam Kromah, Brandon McBride, Raven Saunders, Khadijah Suleman, and Michael Tinsley.

Following the Olympics, Mississippians again turned to Rio to cheer for our local all-stars in the 2016 Paralympic Games.

Charlie Swearingen from Gulfport competed on the sitting volleyball team, which finished eighth. He joined two-time Paralympians Joey Brinson from Florence and Shaquille Vance from Houston, who had earned a silver medal in 2012. Joey finished ninth in his category of wheelchair fencing, and Shaquille finished fourth in the men's T42 200-meter run.

The Olympics and Paralympics are an inspiring showcase of international goodwill and sportsmanship. These Mississippians have represented us well on the world stage, and I have no doubt they will continue to succeed in their future endeavors.●

MESSAGES FROM THE HOUSE

At 12:02 p.m., a message from the House of Representatives, delivered by Mr. Novotny, one of its reading clerks, announced that the House has passed the following bills, in which it requests the concurrence of the Senate:

H.R. 670. An act to amend title XIX of the Social Security Act to extend the Medicaid rules regarding supplemental needs trusts for Medicaid beneficiaries to trusts established by those beneficiaries, and for other purposes.

H.R. 3937. An act to designate the building utilized as a United States courthouse located at 150 Reade Circle in Greenville,

North Carolina, as the “Randy D. Doub United States Courthouse”.

H.R. 4887. An act to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 23323 Shelby Road in Shelby, Indiana, as the “Richard Allen Cable Post Office”.

H.R. 5150. An act to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 3031 Veterans Road West in Staten Island, New York, as the “Leonard Montalto Post Office Building”.

H.R. 5309. An act to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 401 McElroy Drive in Oxford, Mississippi, as the “Army First Lieutenant Donald C. Carwile Post Office Building”.

H.R. 5356. An act to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 14231 TX-150 in Coldspring, Texas, as the “E. Marie Youngblood Post Office”.

H.R. 5591. An act to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 810 N US Highway 83 in Zapata, Texas, as the “Zapata Veterans Post Office”.

H.R. 5612. An act to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 2886 Sandy Plains Road in Marietta, Georgia, as the “Marine Lance Corporal Squire ‘Skip’ Wells Post Office Building”.

H.R. 5676. An act to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 6300 N. Northwest Highway in Chicago, Illinois, as the “Officer Joseph P. Cali Post Office Building”.

H.R. 5687. An act to eliminate or modify certain mandates of the Government Accountability Office.

H.R. 5690. An act to ensure the Government Accountability Office has adequate access to information.

H.R. 5785. An act to amend title 5, United States Code, to provide for an annuity supplement for certain air traffic controllers.

H.R. 5889. An act to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 1 Chalan Kanoa VLG in Saipan, Northern Mariana Islands, as the “Segundo T. Sablan and CNMI Fallen Military Heroes Post Office Building”.

H.R. 5944. An act to amend title 49, United States Code, with respect to certain grant assurances, and for other purposes.

H.R. 5957. An act to include disabled veteran leave in the personnel management system of the Federal Aviation Administration.

ENROLLED BILLS SIGNED

At 12:56 p.m., a message from the House of Representatives, delivered by Mr. Novotny, one of its reading clerks, announced that the Speaker has signed the following enrolled bills:

H.R. 5936. An act to authorize the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to enter into certain leases at the Department of Veterans Affairs West Los Angeles Campus in Los Angeles, California, to make certain improvements to the enhanced-use lease authority of the Department, and for other purposes.

H.R. 5985. An act to amend title 38, United States Code, to extend certain expiring provisions of law administered by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, and for other purposes.

The enrolled bills were subsequently signed by the President pro tempore (Mr. HATCH).

MEASURES REFERRED

The following bills were read the first and the second times by unanimous consent, and referred as indicated:

H.R. 670. An act to amend title XIX of the Social Security Act to extend the Medicaid rules regarding supplemental needs trusts for Medicaid beneficiaries to trusts estab-

lished by those beneficiaries, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Finance.

H.R. 3937. An act to designate the building utilized as a United States courthouse located at 150 Reade Circle in Greenville, North Carolina, as the “Randy D. Doub United States Courthouse”; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

H.R. 4887. An act to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 23323 Shelby Road in Shelby, Indiana, as the “Richard Allen Cable Post Office”; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

H.R. 5150. An act to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 3031 Veterans Road West in Staten Island, New York, as the “Leonard Montalto Post Office Building”; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

H.R. 5309. An act to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 401 McElroy Drive in Oxford, Mississippi, as the “Army First Lieutenant Donald C. Carwile Post Office Building”; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

H.R. 5356. An act to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 14231 TX-150 in Coldspring, Texas, as the “E. Marie Youngblood Post Office”; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

H.R. 5591. An act to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 810 N US Highway 83 in Zapata, Texas, as the “Zapata Veterans Post Office”; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

H.R. 5612. An act to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 2886 Sandy Plains Road in Marietta, Georgia, as the “Marine Lance Corporal Squire ‘Skip’ Wells Post Office Building”; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

H.R. 5676. An act to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 6300 N. Northwest Highway in Chicago, Illinois, as the “Officer Joseph P. Cali Post Office Building”; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

H.R. 5889. An act to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 1 Chalan Kanoa VLG in Saipan, Northern Mariana Islands, as the “Segundo T. Sablan and CNMI Fallen Military Heroes Post Office Building”; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

The following reports of committees were submitted:

By Mr. JOHNSON, from the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs, without amendment:

S. 2849. A bill to ensure the Government Accountability Office has adequate access to information (Rept. No. 114-356).

EXECUTIVE REPORTS OF COMMITTEE

The following executive reports of nominations were submitted:

By Mr. ALEXANDER for the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

*Thomas G. Kotarac, of Illinois, to be a Member of the Railroad Retirement Board for a term expiring August 28, 2017.

*Constance Smith Barker, of Alabama, to be a Member of the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission for a term expiring July 1, 2021.

*Nomination was reported with recommendation that it be confirmed subject to the nominee's commitment to respond to requests to appear and testify before any duly constituted committee of the Senate.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

The following bills and joint resolutions were introduced, read the first and second times by unanimous consent, and referred as indicated:

By Mr. HATCH:

S. 3366. A bill to streamline the R-1 religious worker visa petition process; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. WARNER (for himself, Mr. BENNET, Mrs. BOXER, Mr. BURR, Ms. COLLINS, Mr. DAINES, Mr. GARDNER, Mrs. GILLIBRAND, Mr. KAINE, Mr. KING, Mr. MARKEY, Mr. NELSON, Mr. PETERS, Mr. SCHUMER, Mr. STABENOW, Mr. TESTER, Mr. TILLIS, and Ms. WARREN):

S. 3367. A bill to authorize the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to carry out certain major medical facility leases of the Department of Veterans Affairs; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

By Mr. COONS (for himself and Mr. ISAKSON):

S. 3368. A bill to amend the Higher Education Act of 1965 to improve college access and college completion for all students; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Mr. MCCAIN (for himself, Mr. CORNYN, Mr. COTTON, Mr. BURR, Mr. GRAHAM, and Mr. SESSIONS):

S. 3369. A bill to amend section 2709 of title 18, United States Code, to clarify that the Government may obtain a specified set of electronic communication transactional records under that section, and to make permanent the authority for individual terrorists to be treated as agents of foreign powers under the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act of 1978; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. WHITEHOUSE:

S. 3370. A bill to restrict confidentiality agreements that prohibit the disclosure of information relating to hazards to public safety or health, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. WYDEN (for himself, Mr. STABENOW, Mr. BENNET, Mr. NELSON, and Mr. BROWN):

S. 3371. A bill to amend titles II, XVIII, and XIX of the Social Security Act to improve the affordability and enrollment procedures of the Medicare program, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. CASSIDY:

S. 3372. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to provide for a partial exclusion from the excise tax imposed on heavy trucks sold at retail for alternative fuel trucks; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. WARNER (for himself and Mr. MORAN):

S. 3373. A bill to amend the Federal Deposit Insurance Act to ensure that the reciprocal deposits of an insured depository institution are not considered to be funds obtained by or through a deposit broker, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

By Mr. NELSON:

S. 3374. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to provide a reduced excise tax rate for portable, electronically aerated bait containers; to the Committee on Finance.

By Ms. BALDWIN (for herself and Mr. PETERS):

S. 3375. A bill to amend the Small Business Investment Act of 1985 to enhance the Small Business Investment Company Program and provide for a small business early-stage investment program; to the Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship.

By Mr. COTTON (for himself, Mr. LEE, and Mr. GRAHAM):

S. 3376. A bill to ensure the integrity of laws enacted to prevent the use of financial instruments for funding or operating online casinos are not undermined by legal opinions not carrying the force of law issued by Federal Government lawyers; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mrs. BOXER (for herself and Mrs. SHAHEEN):

S. 3377. A bill to increase the participation of women in foreign security forces, specifically the military and police, with United States foreign assistance; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

By Mr. BURR (for himself and Mr. TILLIS):

S. 3378. A bill to amend the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act of 1991 to designate certain parts of United States Route 264 and the Eastern North Carolina Gateway Corridor as future parts of the Interstate System, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

By Mr. THUNE (for himself, Mr. NELSON, Mrs. FISCHER, and Mr. BOOKER):

S. 3379. A bill to improve surface transportation and maritime security; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

ADDITIONAL COSPONSORS

S. 388

At the request of Mr. BOOKER, the name of the Senator from California (Mrs. BOXER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 388, a bill to amend the Animal Welfare Act to require humane treatment of animals by Federal Government facilities.

S. 540

At the request of Ms. COLLINS, the name of the Senator from Hawaii (Ms. HIRONO) was added as a cosponsor of S. 540, a bill to amend the Richard B. Russell National School Lunch Act to require the Secretary of Agriculture to make loan guarantees and grants to finance certain improvements to school lunch facilities, to train school food service personnel, and for other purposes.

S. 569

At the request of Mr. LEAHY, the name of the Senator from Hawaii (Ms. HIRONO) was added as a cosponsor of S. 569, a bill to reauthorize the farm to school program, and for other purposes.

S. 574

At the request of Mr. SCOTT, the name of the Senator from Indiana (Mr. DONNELLY) was added as a cosponsor of S. 574, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to allow employers a credit against income tax for employees who participate in qualified apprenticeship programs.

S. 689

At the request of Mr. THUNE, the name of the Senator from Oklahoma

(Mr. LANKFORD) was added as a cosponsor of S. 689, a bill to provide protections for certain sports medicine professionals who provide certain medical services in a secondary State.

S. 1539

At the request of Mrs. MURRAY, the name of the Senator from Hawaii (Ms. HIRONO) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1539, a bill to amend the Richard B. Russell National School Lunch Act to establish a permanent, nationwide summer electronic benefits transfer for children program.

S. 1945

At the request of Mr. CASSIDY, the name of the Senator from North Carolina (Mr. TILLIS) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1945, a bill to make available needed psychiatric, psychological, and supportive services for individuals with mental illness and families in mental health crisis, and for other purposes.

S. 2067

At the request of Mr. WICKER, the name of the Senator from Oklahoma (Mr. LANKFORD) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2067, a bill to establish EUREKA Prize Competitions to accelerate discovery and development of disease-modifying, preventive, or curative treatments for Alzheimer's disease and related dementia, to encourage efforts to enhance detection and diagnosis of such diseases, or to enhance the quality and efficiency of care of individuals with such diseases.

S. 2216

At the request of Mrs. MCCASKILL, the name of the Senator from New Hampshire (Mrs. SHAHEEN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2216, a bill to provide immunity from suit for certain individuals who disclose potential examples of financial exploitation of senior citizens, and for other purposes.

S. 2341

At the request of Mr. BENNET, the name of the Senator from Florida (Mr. NELSON) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2341, a bill to designate a portion of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge as wilderness.

S. 2420

At the request of Mr. BLUMENTHAL, the name of the Senator from Hawaii (Ms. HIRONO) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2420, a bill to amend the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008 to modify the exception to the work requirement.

S. 2595

At the request of Mr. CRAPO, the name of the Senator from Louisiana (Mr. VITTER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2595, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to permanently extend the railroad track maintenance credit.

S. 2832

At the request of Mr. ISAKSON, the name of the Senator from Tennessee (Mr. CORKER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2832, a bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to ensure fairness in Medicare hospital payments by

establishing a floor for the area wage index applied with respect to certain hospitals.

S. 2873

At the request of Mr. HATCH, the name of the Senator from Montana (Mr. DAINES) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2873, a bill to require studies and reports examining the use of, and opportunities to use, technology-enabled collaborative learning and capacity building models to improve programs of the Department of Health and Human Services, and for other purposes.

S. 2912

At the request of Mr. JOHNSON, the name of the Senator from Colorado (Mr. GARDNER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2912, a bill to authorize the use of unapproved medical products by patients diagnosed with a terminal illness in accordance with State law, and for other purposes.

S. 2927

At the request of Mr. LANKFORD, the name of the Senator from Utah (Mr. LEE) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2927, a bill to prevent governmental discrimination against providers of health services who decline involvement in abortion, and for other purposes.

S. 2932

At the request of Mr. CASSIDY, the name of the Senator from North Dakota (Ms. HEITKAMP) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2932, a bill to amend the Controlled Substances Act with respect to the provision of emergency medical services.

S. 2941

At the request of Ms. AYOTTE, the name of the Senator from New York (Mr. SCHUMER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2941, a bill to require a study on women and lung cancer, and for other purposes.

S. 2953

At the request of Mr. BARRASSO, the name of the Senator from Montana (Mr. DAINES) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2953, a bill to promote patient-centered care and accountability at the Indian Health Service, and for other purposes.

S. 3006

At the request of Ms. MURKOWSKI, the name of the Senator from Kansas (Mr. MORAN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 3006, a bill to provide for the exchange of certain National Forest System land and non-Federal land in the State of Alaska, and for other purposes.

S. 3023

At the request of Mrs. MCCASKILL, the name of the Senator from New Hampshire (Mrs. SHAHEEN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 3023, a bill to provide for the reconsideration of claims for disability compensation for veterans who were the subjects of experiments by the Department of Defense during World War II that were conducted to assess the effects of mustard gas or lewisite on people, and for other purposes.

S. 3065

At the request of Mr. WYDEN, the name of the Senator from Massachusetts (Mr. MARKEY) was added as a cosponsor of S. 3065, a bill to amend parts B and E of title IV of the Social Security Act to invest in funding prevention and family services to help keep children safe and supported at home, to ensure that children in foster care are placed in the least restrictive, most family-like, and appropriate settings, and for other purposes.

At the request of Mr. HATCH, the name of the Senator from Mississippi (Mr. WICKER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 3065, *supra*.

S. 3073

At the request of Ms. BALDWIN, the name of the Senator from New Hampshire (Mrs. SHAHEEN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 3073, a bill to establish a commission to ensure a suitable observance of the centennial of the passage and ratification of the Nineteenth Amendment to the United States Constitution providing for women's suffrage, and for other purposes.

S. 3101

At the request of Mr. CASSIDY, the name of the Senator from West Virginia (Mr. MANCHIN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 3101, a bill to amend the Public Health Service Act to limit the liability of health care professionals who volunteer to provide health care services in response to a disaster.

S. 3198

At the request of Mr. HATCH, the names of the Senator from Maine (Ms. COLLINS), the Senator from Utah (Mr. LEE) and the Senator from Massachusetts (Mr. MARKEY) were added as cosponsors of S. 3198, a bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to improve the provision of adult day health care services for veterans.

S. 3244

At the request of Mr. ROBERTS, the name of the Senator from New Hampshire (Mrs. SHAHEEN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 3244, a bill to amend title XXVII of the Public Health Service Act to clarify the treatment of pediatric dental coverage in the individual and group markets outside of Exchanges established under the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act, and for other purposes.

S. 3253

At the request of Mrs. FISCHER, the name of the Senator from Nebraska (Mr. SASSE) was added as a cosponsor of S. 3253, a bill to require the Occupational Safety and Health Administration to provide notice and comment rulemaking for the revised enforcement policy relating to the exemption of retail facilities from coverage of the process safety management of highly hazardous chemicals standard under section 1910.119(a)(2)(i) of title 29, Code of Federal Regulations, and for other purposes.

S. 3270

At the request of Mr. GRASSLEY, the name of the Senator from Maine (Ms.

COLLINS) was added as a cosponsor of S. 3270, a bill to prevent elder abuse and exploitation and improve the justice system's response to victims in elder abuse and exploitation cases.

S. 3285

At the request of Mr. RUBIO, the name of the Senator from Utah (Mr. HATCH) was added as a cosponsor of S. 3285, a bill to prohibit the President from using funds appropriated under section 1304 of title 31, United States Code, to make payments to Iran, to impose sanctions with respect to Iranian persons that hold or detain United States citizens, and for other purposes.

S. 3296

At the request of Mr. MCCAIN, the name of the Senator from South Carolina (Mr. SCOTT) was added as a cosponsor of S. 3296, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to provide an exemption to the individual mandate to maintain health coverage for individuals residing in counties with fewer than 2 health insurance issuers offering plans on an Exchange.

S. 3297

At the request of Mr. COTTON, the name of the Senator from Ohio (Mr. PORTMAN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 3297, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to provide an exemption to the individual mandate to maintain health coverage for certain individuals whose premium has increased by more than 10 percent, and for other purposes.

S. 3304

At the request of Mr. THUNE, the name of the Senator from Arkansas (Mr. COTTON) was added as a cosponsor of S. 3304, a bill to direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to improve the Veterans Crisis Line.

S. 3308

At the request of Mrs. CAPITO, the name of the Senator from Mississippi (Mr. WICKER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 3308, a bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to prohibit prescription drug plan sponsors and MA-PD organizations under the Medicare program from retroactively reducing payment on clean claims submitted by pharmacies.

S. 3328

At the request of Mr. BLUMENTHAL, the name of the Senator from New Mexico (Mr. HEINRICH) was added as a cosponsor of S. 3328, a bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to reform the rights and processes relating to appeals of decisions regarding claims for benefits under the laws administered by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, and for other purposes.

S. 3355

At the request of Mr. COTTON, the names of the Senator from Idaho (Mr. RISCH), the Senator from Missouri (Mr. BLUNT) and the Senator from Nebraska (Mr. SASSE) were added as cosponsors of S. 3355, a bill to prohibit funding for the Preparatory Commission for the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Trea-

ty Organization in the event the United Nations Security Council adopts a resolution that obligates the United States or affirms a purported obligation of the United States to refrain from actions that would run counter to the object and purpose of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty.

S. RES. 527

At the request of Mr. UDALL, the name of the Senator from Michigan (Mr. PETERS) was added as a cosponsor of S. Res. 527, a resolution recognizing the 75th anniversary of the opening of the National Gallery of Art.

S. RES. 535

At the request of Mr. MARKEY, the name of the Senator from New Hampshire (Mrs. SHAHEEN) was added as a cosponsor of S. Res. 535, a resolution expressing the sense of the Senate regarding the trafficking of illicit fentanyl into the United States from Mexico and China.

S. RES. 570

At the request of Mr. MURPHY, the name of the Senator from Ohio (Mr. PORTMAN) was added as a cosponsor of S. Res. 570, a resolution recognizing the importance of substance abuse disorder treatment and recovery in the United States.

AUTHORITY FOR COMMITTEES TO MEET

COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE, NUTRITION, AND FORESTRY

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on September 21, 2016, at 10 a.m., in room SR-328A of the Russell Senate Office Building, to conduct a hearing entitled "The U.S. Department of Agriculture and the Current State of Farm Economy."

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE, SCIENCE, AND TRANSPORTATION

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on September 21, 2016, at 10 a.m., in room SR-253 of the Russell Senate Office Building.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Finance be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on September 21, 2016, at 10 a.m., in room SD-215 of the Dirksen Senate Office Building.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

COMMITTEE ON INDIAN AFFAIRS

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Indian Affairs be authorized

to meet during the session of the Senate on September 21, 2016, in room SD-628 of the Dirksen Senate Office Building, at 2 p.m.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

SELECT COMMITTEE ON INTELLIGENCE

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Select Committee on Intelligence be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on September 21, 2016, at 1 p.m., in room SH-219 of the Hart Senate Office Building.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

SUBCOMMITTEE ON FISHERIES, WATER, AND WILDLIFE

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Subcommittee on Fisheries, Water, and Wildlife of the Committee on Environment and Public Works be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on September 21, 2016, at 2:30 p.m., in room SD-406 of the Dirksen Senate Office Building, to conduct a hearing entitled, "Reviewing the Proposed Revisions to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Mitigation Policy."

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

SUBCOMMITTEE ON NATIONAL SECURITY AND INTERNATIONAL TRADE AND FINANCE

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs Subcommittee on National Security and International Trade and Finance be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on September 21, 2016, at 10:30 a.m., to conduct a hearing entitled, "Terror Financing Risks of America's \$1.7 Billion Cash Payments to Iran."

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

PRIVILEGES OF THE FLOOR

Mr. DONNELLY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that Sarah Thomson, a member of my staff, be granted floor privileges for the day.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

ORDERS FOR THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 22, 2016

Mr. LEE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that when the Senate completes its business today, it adjourn until 9:30 a.m., Thursday, September 22; that following the prayer and pledge, the morning hour be

deemed expired, the Journal of proceedings be approved to date, and the time for the two leaders be reserved for their use later in the day; further, that following leader remarks, the Senate be in a period of morning business, with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each until 11 a.m.; that following morning business, the Senate resume consideration of the motion to proceed to H.R. 5325, postcloture; further, that notwithstanding the provisions of rule XXII, all postcloture time on the motion to proceed to H.R. 5325 expire at 11 a.m. tomorrow; finally, that if the motion to proceed is agreed to, Senator McCONNELL be recognized to offer a substitute amendment.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

ADJOURNMENT UNTIL 9:30 A.M. TOMORROW

Mr. LEE. Mr. President, if there is no further business to come before the Senate, I ask unanimous consent that it stand adjourned under the previous order.

There being no objection, the Senate, at 6:31 p.m., adjourned until Thursday, September 22, 2016, at 9:30 a.m.